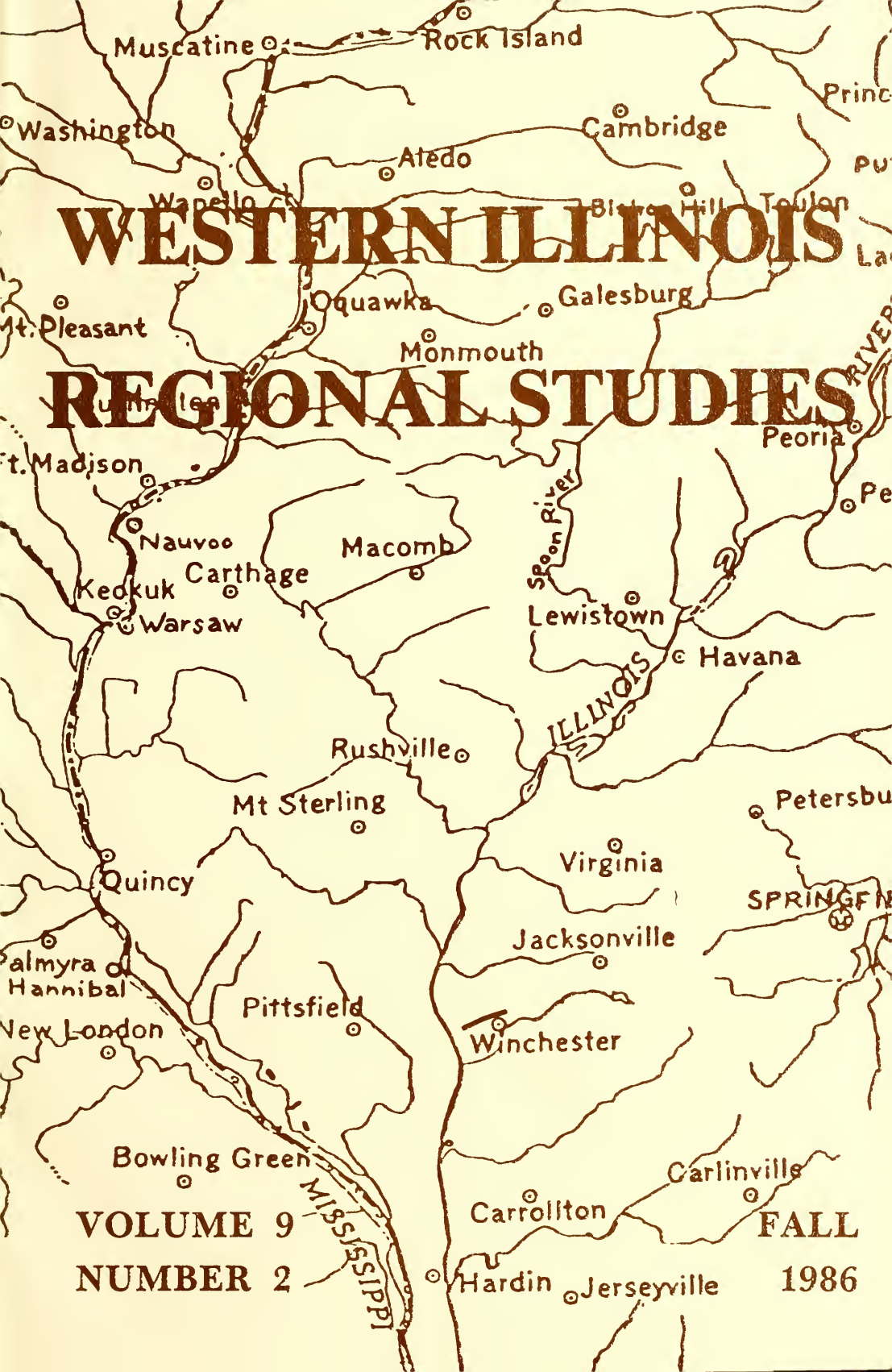
WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES



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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The frontier period of any country, region or continent is a time of profound changes in human occupancy, land use, material culture, and social and political conditions. The very word "frontier"—defined by Webster as a zone or region that marks the successive limits of settlement and civilization—derives from "front," in the sense of a boundary that separates two distinct geographic areas. In the North American experience the word "frontier" assumed the additional, sometimes overriding meaning of a historical period. Frederick Jackson Turner, the prominent American historian of the 19th century, interpreted this period as a political and philosophical force in American life, while popular culture frequently used the frontier period as theme in novels and movies.

The frontier in western Illinois, as in all of North America, is defined both by time and space. As America's eastern shoreline became crowded through natural increase in population and immigration, pressure for additional land resources pushed the boundaries of white occupancy ever more westward. This resulted in a shifting band of permanent white settlements which reached western Illinois in the early 1820's. Here these settlements progressed in a chronological sequence generally from southeast to northwest, with some movement also in the straight east-west direction. However, this band of white occupancy which permanently replaced Indian tribes in the area was not a uniform wave, either in terms of its extension or density of population. The frontier in western Illinois included large areas of exceedingly thin occupancy, as well as relatively dense clusters of settlers, far in advance of the more uniform settlement wave.

The frontier, viewed as a historical period, is also characterized by change, the gradual transition from socially unstructured and unrestained interaction to a relatively stable social order. Included in this development are rising public institutions such as churches, schools and governmental bodies, as well as improved transportation, more healthful living conditions, increased access to material and cultural amenities, and decreased danger from natural causes.

Physical hardship and unsettled social conditions on the frontier formed an environment where survival depended to a great extent on risk-taking, personal physical strength, rugged individualism and self reliance. It is this latter quality which prompted Frederick Jackson Turner to call the frontier a "crucible of American character." Pitted against a harsh environment and forced to make adjustments both in his physical and social life, the frontiersman became his own boss, willing and able not only to help himself, but also to take charge of his society. This in turn influenced the way frontier politics was pursued, and in the final analysis, helped to

shape the American democratic consciousness. Turner's thesis, whether right or wrong, added a new dimension to the meaning of the frontier.

The contributions to this special *WIRS* issue, "The Frontier in Western Illinois," reflect many of the attributes of frontier life outlined above. Hard life and the perils of travel are vividly described in William Dixon's memoirs. Exaggerated expectations and an ambiguous success are shown in the history of Illinois City. The terrible ravages of unchecked diseases are well documented in the article on Nauvoo mortality. The thoroughly researched article on the life of William Scripps throws light on early religious and cultural life on the edge of wilderness, while the lighthearted account of hospitality on the frontier illuminates domestic accommodations and clashing social and cultural mores. Not all accounts in these contributions are strictly from western Illinois, but they all reflect that period in the history of the region. Readers of this special issue should find them to be both informative and amusing.

Gordana Rezab

JOHN SCRIPPS: CIRCUIT RIDER AND NEWSPAPERMAN

David Haney

John Scripps is a significant figure in the history of Methodism in Missouri and Illinois because of his early itinerancy among pioneer settlers and his association with such Methodist heroes as Jesse Walker and Bishop William McKendree. He came to Illinois in 1814 as an exhorter in the company of a Methodist circuit rider. During his subsequent careers as preacher, merchant, and newspaperman, he witnessed the settlement of Illinois, and was instrumental in the development of his last hometown of Rushville. Scripps founded churches, lobbied for the establishment of schools, and nurtured Rushville's weekly newspaper through its infancy. By the time of his death in 1865, these had become venerable institutions and the region had filled up with tradesmen and farmers.

A substantial body of Scripps' writing has been preserved, including historical reminiscences, newspaper articles, editorials, autobiographical notes, about two dozen poems, a short story, and a dozen "carrier's addresses," which were new year's greetings in verse, supposedly from the newspaper carrier to his patrons. Scripps kept a scrapbook of his editorials from 1850 to 1853, four of the six years that he edited the *Rushville Prairie Telegraph*. A few whole numbers of the *Prairie Telegraph* are available on microfilm, and provide further insight into Scripps' editorial judgment. In addition, Scripps wrote six articles for the *Western Christian Advocate* in 1842, recalling the early days of Methodism in the region. A few months before he died, he dictated several pages of autobiographical notes, which were printed for private distribution in 1972.

Scripps shared with other authors of the time the belief that the West offered almost limitless opportunity, and that progress and prosperity would naturally accrue to those who instilled Christianity and democracy in the virgin territory of Illinois. All of Scripps' writing was imbued with the vision of the West as the new Eden and its conquest as a sacred mission. Being appointed to ride the Illinois Circuit in 1816 gave him the opportunity to be at the vanguard of the influx of white civilization in the area. The *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, in an account of Scripps' visit to its offices in Chicago during 1857, reported, "He says there was a time when he was personally acquainted with every family in the state of Illinois!"[1]

Scripps' life spans the period from the end of the American Revolution to the end of the Civil War, and his perceptions of the West mirror the prevalent attitudes of the period, sometimes in spite of his own experience. The expectations that led to westward expansion to the Mississippi and beyond did a great deal to form his world outlook and govern the events of his life.

John Scripps was born on August 26, 1785, in the Bridewell district of London.[2] He was a premature baby, the twelfth of nineteen children his mother bore, and at his birth only two of the previous eleven children survived.[3] Somewhat prophetically, St. Bride's Church "was the parish church of the largest community of printers ever gathered together in the world."[4] There is no direct evidence that this juxtaposition influenced the later successes of the Scripps family in publishing, but it was as publishers that Scrippses were to rise to positions of influence and wealth on both sides of the Atlantic.[5]

The Scripps family was remembered as a "race of carpenters" who traced their ancestry back to 1619 in the town of Ely, Cambridgeshire.[6] John Scripps' father, William, had gone to London about 1770 to seek medical attention for an ankle injury he had received as a boy and apparently moved to London about 1773. In 1771 he had married Grace Locke, who, according to family tradition, was related to the philosopher John Locke.[7] His health restored, he worked as a carpenter in London for a time before becoming a shoemaker. William evidently operated a large shoemaking shop, employing as many as 70 persons, but it was not successful, and he left England in 1791, owing debts which were subsequently paid by his eldest son, William Armiger Scripps, who remained behind.[8]

An anecdote remembered within the Scripps family offers some insight into William Scripp's personality: "He seems to have been of a jolly disposition, and I [James Scripps] have heard an amusing story of his once, for a wager, undertaking to kiss every female he met in the street on his way home from some convivial gathering."[9] He was also considered honest and practical. An elderly woman remembering William 63 years after his death recalled that "anything a Scripps said could always be relied on," and she remembered William's advice, "when you learn anything, learn something useful."[10] That he was literate is indicated by the following recollection: "When [John Scripps] became a Methodist, he burned a large library of novels to the great disappointment of his friends and acquaintances, who had expected a distribution of them. (This fact I [his great-nephew] have myself heard Rev. John Scripps relate, but as I understood him, it was his father's library which had come into his possession.)[11]

William and Grace sailed for America in May, 1791, with five of their six children, arriving in Baltimore before the Fourth of July. They moved to Alexandria, Virginia, in the fall and there set up a boot and shoe business. William was determined, however, to pursue an agricultural life and

bought a parcel of land said to be near Morgantown, but after a three-week, 250-mile journey with three wagons, he found that he had been swindled, and that his property lay 20 miles from any settlement. He bought another tract, which proved to be sterile ground on which he could raise no crops. In another instance, ". . . he purchased a tract that was found to be in a Methodist neighborhood, and he was too strong an Episcopalian to have an association with the long-faced Methodists . . . ."[12] He finally settled on "the least objectionable of his purchases of heavy woodland," where he attempted to farm with only himself, his 15-year old son Benjamin, and a young black woman named Minor, who the *Memorial* volume describes as a slave, providing the labor.[13] This attempt at farming was only moderately successful, and William again turned to shoemaking to supplement the family income, sometimes in barter for labor.[14]

John Scripps received little formal education, but early demonstrated an unusual fondness for books. A Miss Harrison apparently taught him the rudiments of reading while the family was still in England, and since he was a sickly child, he spent a good deal of time indoors with books, "particularly an illustrated *Book of Common Prayer.*"[15] On his eighth birthday his mother introduced him to regular reading of the Bible, and he occasionally had the benefit of winter schools conducted between harvest and planting seasons. Most of John's time was spent working, so his study time was limited to Sundays and winter evenings when his parents had no chores for him:

> Sundays, when not drawn out to berrying or nutting, or sent cattle, or hog hunting, for having no pasture all were turned out into the wide range of the forest for their graze, and were often missed several days, and we had no other leisure to hunt them. Winter nights I had, if my parents could find nothing for me to do, if it was only the twisting large quantities of coarse tow into twine, to be made into ropes and lines when needed for horse gearing or other uses. . .[16]

What time he was spared from household chores he spent reading and teaching himself to write by copying and abridging the books he read.[17]

At 18, John became an apprentice to Jacob Stealey of Clarksburg, Virginia, from whom he learned the tanning business which he would later pursue in Missouri and Illinois. After the second year of his apprenticeship, Scripps was entrusted with the business's books and apparently exercised a good deal of freedom. He continued making manuscript abridgements of books he had borrowed, and entered the Virginia Academy in 1805.[18]

He became friends with one of the professors at the Academy, Rev. G. Towers, a Presbyterian clergyman, and his wife, who loaned him books and encouraged his studies. Scripps recalled from the same period that "Dr. Williams, the most literary man in the community, found me out, and often visited, and would spend hours with me helping me forward."[19] One of the books Rev. Tower loaned Scripps was *Grotius; The Truth of the*

Christian Religion, which Scripps welcomed because it seemed to offer some intellectual underpinning to his religious inclinations, which had met only Episcopalian dogma in his parents' house.

Scripp's interest in the book was heightened by an experience of *deja vu:*

> I now resolved to spend the next days in reading this book, with the closest attention. In bed that night, I dreamed the morning of Sunday had come and I took up the book to read it, when it occured to me to wait till after breakfast, and then retire to where my quiet could not be intruded on, and I could pay closer attention on to it. I laid it down and picked up another, and walked over to the mill, a few rods distant, to amuse myself with it during the two hours that had yet to run before breakfast, and while reading it at a particular window, the miller came to me and told me he was going to his breakfast, and requested me to watch and when the hopper became empty of the present grist then grinding, to fill it up again from another bag which he showed me. I told him I would. He went away, and I forgot all about it till roused from my reverie by a sudden change in the sound of the mill's machinery, which alarmed me, and I ran to the hopper to comply with his request, only to see that thro' my neglect the upper millstone, for want of grain, had fell down to the nether and had ground itself away. I immediately awaked. It was midnight, and I went to sleep again, and arose in the morning without the least recollection of my dream, nor did the remembrance of it ever recur to my mind till every circumstance of it was completely fulfilled to the least minutiae of every particular, save the grinding away of the millstone, for I was actually aroused by a change in the sound of the machinery, so similar to the sound heard in my dream, as to bring it again for the first time to my memory.[20]

He spent the next day "reading and digesting the contents of the book, with prayers and tears and intensest interest," and Grotius' arguments led him to become "more of a believer than an infidel."[21] He resolved to join a church, and after reading what he could about the various denominations, chose to become a Methodist, as his mother had done some years earlier at Morgantown, and his father and sister had recently done. The Methodists were at the center of great religious excitement in the area in 1808, leading to what Scripps described as "ridiculous extravagances, in what was called religious exercises . . . but these extravagant ebulitions of weak, untutored minds did not alienate me from my prediliction for the doctrine of Methodism," and he joined the church that year.[22] Scripps attended a camp meeting in 1808 of 1809, expecting that the excitement would "induce a disposition to shout and pray," but he "remained unimpressible and returned home unimpressed and quite disappointed and discouraged."[23]

John Scripps had by this time (he was 23) developed a strong self-discipline and sensed a certain distance between himself and the more common classes with which he dealt. During his apprenticeship in Clarksburg, he spent little time with the journeymen and employees, "a reckless, drinking, swearing, gambling class." Vulgarity was foreign to

Rev. John Scripps

Scripps' nature: "I once swore an oath in knocking a man down who had insulted me, and having frequently witnessed such acts and always accompanied with an oath, I felt for the moment that it was a necessary adjunct, but was so laughed at for my awkwardness in pronouncing it that I never repeated it again."[24] His inclinations led toward solitary avocations: ". . . being naturally and habitually addicted to study and literary pursuits, I spent most of my leisure time in them."[25]

Rev. Tower and his wife encouraged Scripps to smoke "as an incentive to study," and he credited the habit with allowing him to get by with two or three hours' less sleep than he would otherwise require. He had, during his apprenticeship, adopted a "very plain raiment," and in the following year, when he lived at his father's home and taught school, he kept up a regimen of praying "sometimes twenty times a day" and fasting twice a week. He became a vegetarian, and was so abstemious as to make himself sick, whereupon he returned to more normal eating habits.[26]

In 1809 the Scripps family sold its 70-acre farm in Virginia for $3000 and moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in hopes of finding better prospects.[27] John hastened the departure for Missouri, to get the family away from the "low associates [they] had to mingle with."[28] His older brother Benjamin had gone down the Ohio in 1800, had served in a Spanish battalion against the Indians during the winter of 1802, traveled through eastern Texas in 1804, and kept a tavern in New Orleans.[29] He became a trader on the Red River in 1806, and in 1809 owned a farm in Catahola Parish, Louisiana, west of Natchez. It was to this farm that the family was headed when it left Morgantown by flatboat in May, 1809. They were to meet Benjamin at Christmas in Cape Girardeau, but on his way to meet them Benjamin was murdered, so the family remained in Cape Girardeau, and John established a tanyard there.

Younger brother George Henry Scripps determined to go south to inquire into Benjamin's affairs, but before he left he helped build a two-story 20 x 28-foot log home and a shop which was complete with a stone wheel six feet in diameter to crush the bark which was used in the tanning process. This house soon became a preaching point for Samuel Parker, a Methodist itinerant whom the Scrippses had met in Virginia, and who was in 1809 the presiding elder of the Methodist work in Missouri. Scripps recalled, "In 1793 brother Parker, then a youth, had often turned his melodious voice to the songs of Zion at my father's house in Morgantown, Virginia; old recognitions were revived; he put up with us."[30] The following year Jesse Walker was appointed as the preacher on the circuit that included holding services at the Scripps house once every three weeks, and in March, 1810, Scripps accompanied Walker across the "Big Swamp" which lay between Cape Girardeau and New Madrid to the south.[31] During this association Scripps developed a lifelong admiration of the older man, and Walker's influence no doubt prepared Scripps to make the decision to take up the strenuous calling of frontier preacher.

The event that precipitated Scripps' decision to enter the ministry, however, was the smallpox epidemic that swept over the community in 1811. Scripps ran the tanyard while his brother George was away for 10 months, and after his return home George was incapacitated by sickness for another eight months. Their mother died during the epidemic, on July 11, 1811, and their sister Anne died five days later. While John was occupied waiting on the sick, he was of necessity neglecting his business. He recalled, "I was deeply involed in debts, the payment of which depended on my success in the Tanyard, which looked most gloomy . . . ."[32] He continued,

> . . . I asked myself why these accumulating afflictions were thus heaped upon me, and could attribute them to nothing than the judgements of heaven for putting myself out of the way of discharging my duty, for altho I was yet destitute of converting into grace, it had for years been deeply impressed on my mind that it was my duty to preach, but being unconverted I could not receive the impression as moved by the Holy Ghost, and thought a delusion that I must suppress, but notwithstand all my efforts it still followed me day and night, and tho while immersed in business and the overpowering cares I had been subjected to of late, I had experienced a lull. It now returned to me with redoubled force, so much that I solemnly covenanted with God that if the impression was from Him and he would open my way, that I would obey it.[33]

When the business began to prosper, and George was restored to good health, John became more active in Methodist societies, was named class leader, and was occasionally called upon to exhort the congregation.

Although Scripps thought of himself as "unconverted," Walker presented him with a license to preach on June 12, 1813.[34] He was from time to time asked to preach, though "remonstrating . . . incapacity." In the spring of 1814 he accompanied Walker on a tour that began near Edwardsville, Illinois, on April 1, ranged southeast to Cave in Rock, then northeast to Vincennes, Indiana, and concluded by recrossing Illinois into southern Missouri, preaching in the New Madrid region, and arriving at Cape Girardeau on May 20. Walker, as presiding elder, held "quarterly conferences" at most of their stops, and these conferences were usually held in the context of camp meetings, at which Scripps would serve as one of the preachers. When the ordained men went off to annual conference in the fall, Scripps was put on the Illinois Circuit as a substitute.[35]

Scripps was not unique in responding to personal loss by entering the ministry. Walker had become a minister in 1802 following the deaths of his two children, while another contemporary, Peter Akers, heard the call in the deaths of his wife and first child.[36] From Scripps' description it is apparent that he saw prosperity as a function of obedience to the divine will. It is interesting that while he interpreted the deaths of his mother and sister as a message from God, he attributed little significance to the New Madrid earthquake of the previous winter, 1810-1811; Cape Girardeau is little more than 50 miles from the epicenter of this disturbance which shook the entire Midwest. The quakes created a general religious fervor,

but in one brief reference to the experience in the *Western Christian Advocate*, Scripps all but dismissed its religious impact: "This year the Lord shook terribly the earth, particularly the circuits of brother M'Farland's charge; the people became alarmed and fled, many to Christ, but more into the Church for refuge."[37] Timothy Flint, visiting the area some years later, described the religious consequences of the earthquakes in some detail.

> In the interval of the earthquakes there was one evening, and that a brilliant and cloudless one, in which the western sky was a continued glare of vivid flashes of lightning, and of repeated peals of subterranean thunder, seeming to proceed, as the flashes did, from below the horizon . . . One result from these terrific phenomena was very obvious. The people of this village had been noted for their profligacy and impiety. In the midst of these scenes of terror, all, Catholics and Protestants, praying and profane, became of one religion, and partook of one feeling. Two hundred people, speaking English, French, and Spanish, crowded together, their visages pale, the mothers embracing their children — as soon as the omen that preceded the earthquakes became visible, as soon as the air became a little obscured, as though a sudden mist arose from the east — all, in their different languages and forms, but all deeply in earnest, betook themselves to the voice of prayer.[38]

Scripps had never been caught up on the emotionalism of frontier Protestantism and considered himself set apart from the common crowd, so it is consistent with his character that he would recognize a call to duty in personal tragedy but not in a calamity that befell the whole population.

Scripps' experiences as a circuit rider introduced him first hand to the distances and the hardships of traveling that impeded and in some measure shaped the progress of culture in the West. The journeys made him familiar with the sights and the people of the West, giving him license to speak with authority about the region.

Scripps' first appointment as an itinerant preacher was to the Patoka Circuit in southwestern Indiana for the conference year 1815 (fall 1814 to fall 1815). This appointment provided him with several opportunities to observe the character of frontier society. Among the settlers to whom he preached there were Methodists who had emigrated from the East, and Christians of other denominations, some of whom welcomed his preaching, others who were antagonistic. Many were unchurched, and some were lawless. The circuit riders' custom in those days was to concentrate their efforts in the rural areas and avoid the towns, but Scripps extended his preaching in 1815 to Evansville, Indiana, ". . . inhabited by the lowest caste of society, profane and dissipated, spending all their sabbaths amid continual brawls at the grocery, the most important building in their community, but which was locked up during preaching, and the whole town attended preaching, gladly receiving me and treating me with utmost respect."[39] Across the Ohio River in a canebreak was a settlement of supposed fugitives from justice who came

under the influence of Scripps' preaching when they came to do business on the Sabbath and found the grocery closed. Scripps arrived in Evansville unexpectedly one evening and found there a number of these persons from the canebreak, having brought their livestock across the river to escape flood waters that were rising in the settlement. The women and children they had left perched on the roofs of the cabins, and were unable to go back for them until morning, so Scripps held an impromptu preaching service, standing in the doorway of the grocery, and eventually several of these people were added to the Methodist rolls.[40]

The frontier lawless had their own brand of law enforcement. One Friday in September, 1815, Scripps stopped at a house and was asked to stay and preach on Sunday, to which he agreed. His horse was hobbled and belled, but shortly the bell could not be heard, and the horse was nowhere to be seen. Scripps was to find himself the beneficiary of "honor among thieves:"

> The old man reiterated assurances to me of the safe recovery of my horse before I would need him, but . . . I assured him that, unless immediately pursued on a fleet horse, he could not be recovered, and from which opinion I could not be changed, although two other men confirmed my host's assurances, by pledging themselves for his safe restoration. Their confidence in assertion, and apathy in action, equally surprised me; for not a foot could I prevail on any man to stir in pursuit till after preaching on Sunday, when these men started and brought him to me while at breakfast, on Monday morning. The men had redeemed their pledge, and would accept no other remuneration than a promise to make their settlement one of my preaching places. I traveled several miles in the morning before I struck a road, and on arriving at the first house in the evening had the mystery of my horse's disappearance and recovery, and my host's assurances, unraveled. I had been in a nest of most notorious horse thieves, but who would not steal a preacher's horse, if they knew it.[41]

When a business matter occasioned Scripps' first visit to St. Louis in 1815, he found remnants of ancient Indian and more recent French occupations of the place, but the contemporary village did not present a very promising prospect:

> Several large mounds in the vicinity stood (and I believe some yet remain standing) as monuments of antiquated generations long since swept into the sea of oblivion, and of whose existence we have no other mementos; while other monuments, of still more recent generations, in a much more delapidated state, remained in the round towers in different parts surrounding the city, (one of them used as the jail,) and the old fort on the hill, all built of stone, but of which, and some rusty dismounted cannon, scarcely a vestige now remains to tell where the defenses of St. Louis once stood. The stores were all kept in old French stone and wooden buildings. One American built, two story brick house, on Main-street, (then but a muddy alley,) formed the only exception — broke the monotony of the uncouth architecture, and stood in bold relief over the antiquated structures around it. A few French carts, without tires to their wheels, or indeed any iron about either them or the

> harness of the horses that pulled them from Videpache, a French village about (I think) 9 miles distant, loaded with a few short sticks of wood for fuel, at 25 cents per load, up to the hubs in mud, some stalled, others splashing through the streets, exhibited all the out door signs of life I saw while there. Such was St. Louis, December 8, 1815.[42]

Scripps later recalled, in the columns of the *Prairie Telegraph,* "We then saw the Pioneer Press of the west issuing its impressions and catering for all the politicians and news mongers of Illinois, and the then Territory of upper Louisiana, worked sometimes with but one hand, with his two balls and lever . . . ."[43] The owner of that printing house, and the publisher of the first newspaper in Missouri, was Joseph Charless.[44] Scripps returned to St. Louis in 1817, when he was appointed to the Coldwater Circuit, and became friends with Charless and his wife, who were helpful in securing as a preaching place an old log house used as a court house and theatre. Scripps preached there on April 23, 1817, surrounded by comic scenery.[45]

Scripps was named to the Illinois Circuit for 1816, but learning in December, 1815, that Walker was preparing for a winter tour of his district, and thinking it dangerous for him to travel alone, he secured substitute preachers to fulfill his obligations and accompanied the older man. Walker was then 49 and Scripps 30. If the pair undertook the trip to combat Satan's influence, a more immediate enemy was the vicissitudes of Midwestern weather:

> On one occasion we entered a 12 mile prairie about 4 o'clock in the evening, with our upper garments completely saturated, the effects of an afternoon's hard rain. At about 5 o'clock the wind changed, and the residue of our way we traveled in a sleet, or rather, more literally, a storm of ice, while the darkness of the night compelled us to yield the reins to our horses; and on our arrival at the house, we were obliged to require assistance to help us off our horses, as our clothes had become so inflexible with ice that we could scarcely move in them, and could not, without help, have dismounted.[46]

In 1816 the Methodist General Conference established the Missouri Conference as a separate unit, with its first annual meeting to take place at Shiloh, the oldest Methodist church in Illinois, which lay within Scripps' circuit.[47] In addition to other preparations for this meeting, Scripps was to ride to Vincennes and accompany Bishop William McKendree and his party to the conference.[48] He reported in the *Western Christian Advocate* of January 13, 1843, that his "instructions" were to "acquaint [himself] with the direct route from St. Louis."[49] Scripps' 1865 recollection of this event was that he "resolved on the direct route," which was "uninhabited for 130 miles," rather than fatigue the Bishop further by taking the circuitous route down the Wabash and Ohio Rivers and up the Mississippi. On the trip to Vincennes, he traveled with Major Evans, a Revolutionary War veteran who had served under George Rogers Clark in the campaign of 1778-79 that took Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes for the United States.[50] The return trip was pleasant, but Scripps still doubted his call and resolved to quit the ministry. He expressed his doubts to the Bishop, who

Drawing by Drummond Mansfield.

assured him, "If John Scripps was not called to preach, neither was William McKendree."[51]

The constant traveling, preaching and visiting of Scripps' itinerant years not only provided him with incidents and anecdotes for later retelling, but also gave him the opportunity to develop a rhetorical style and refine his ideas about church and political matters. Occasionally Scripps' descriptions of his experiences were almost poetic. In 1816, he was notified at his preaching place on the Merimack River in Missouri that his presence was required at Cape Girardeau three days hence:

> I therefore purchased a canoe, and within an hour was descending the stream. One of the darkest nights I ever witnessed soon inclosed me in an impenitrable gloom, till about 11 o'clock, when, arriving within 6 or 8 miles of the Mississippi, whose high waters here averted the current of the Merimack, I seemed suddenly transported into a scene of enchantment. The luxurient foliage of almost impervious brushwood, entangled with vines, and thickly studded with large forest trees from either side, throwing their giant arms across, and intermingling with each other high over head, embowering the narrow channel, all rendered indistinctly visible only, by the luminous gyrations of inconceivable millions of the fire-fly, by whose reflections on the waters beneath, reflecting as below in proportion to their heights above, I seemed borne in my little vessel high in the air, amid 'upper nether and surrounding' luminous sparks, through the appearance of what seemed a tunnel. Indeed the scene was so unique, and so inspirative of indescribable feelings, that I could not omit describing it in narrating this journey.[52]

During the summer of 1818 Scripps had the ear of a large portion of the settlers within the bounds of the Boonslick circuit in Missouri, and he used his position to preach against slavery. He did not advocate abolition, but rather "electioneered, and used my utmost efforts against perpetuating slavery in Missouri." He solicited signatures for a petition to be presented to the proposed state constitutional convention: "The prayer of the petition was to make Missouri a free state as far as future emigrants, and children born in the state after its admission, were concerned . . . ."[53] This measure would have caused the number of slaves to gradually decrease as the current generation dwindled, and with no new slaves being added to the population, slavery would eventually disappear from the state. Scripps shared the belief, which he later expressed in his newspaper, that an abrupt end to slavery would dump into the free population a large number of people who were incapable of providing for themselves.[54]

He believed the responsibility of Methodist preachers was to work "towards the alleviation of the evils of slavery," and that their preaching among slaves and slaveholders had "effected much towards the manumission of its victims." He did not think it the province of freestate preachers to harangue the slaveholders, likening that situation to a hypothetical one in which the apostles, attempting to convert the gentiles, ". . . ensconced themselves in Jerusalem, and spent their time and strength in

forming anti-idolatrous associations, and snarled and quarreled with the Gentiles for their idolatries[.]" He felt that a greater effect was achieved by his preaching on slavery to congregations of slaves and slave owners in Missouri, where "the power of convicting grace reached many hearts . . . ."[55]

Scripps did not mention in his recollections the number of slaves set free because of his preaching, nor did he comment on specific improvements his preaching brought about in the treatment of slaves, but it is apparent that he thought there was real benefit in bringing blacks and whites together in Methodist classes. The leader of one of the classes formed while Scripps was pastor in the Boonslick area was a black man named Tom, who, according to Scripps,

> . . . delivered . . . a most eloquent and feeling address on the subject [presumably slavery] to the whites, concluding with a solemn appeal to their sensibilities, that if they had any confidence in old Tom's prayers to come forward also. All were affected, some came forward. The meeting became more and still more interesting, some were blessed, and I felt it a privilege to be there. But these times were before the absurd, unhappy, and uncalled for interference of northern abolitionists. The spirit of enlarging privileges for the black man verging fast towards his final emmancipation was like leaven working in the hearts of slave holding communities; but the baleful clamors of that unhallowed and worse than useless combination has produced a reaction that has re-riveted his fetters, shrouded his brightest prospects, and cast him back into the gloom of the darkest moments of the eighteenth century.[56]

Scripps believed that any substantive change in the treatment of black people would require a change of heart within the white community.

Scripps was held in high esteem by his fellow preachers, as is evident from the fact that he was elected secretary of the Missouri Conference at its first meeting, and was chosen as one of the three delegates from the Missouri Conference to the General Conference of 1820 held in Baltimore.[57] Here Scripps was caught up in the reform movement that dominated Methodist church politics during the decade and culminated in the breaking away of a faction that organized itself into the Methodist Protestant Church in 1830. Wesley had run his movement in authoritarian fashion, which was continued by his bishops in America. From 1808 on, there was a growing sentiment in favor of presiding elders being elected by the annual conferences, rather than being appointed by the bishops. Other reform issues included rights of local preachers and inclusion of laymen in Methodism's deliberative bodies.[58] Though a resolution providing for the election of presiding elders passed with more than a two-thirds majority in 1820, it was subsequently suspended, and the controversy that boiled during the fours year between general conferences was to draw Scripps into the fracas.

Bishop McKendree produced a circular articulating his objections to the election of presiding elders, and Scripps was named to a committee of

preachers who were to recommend to the Missouri Conference agreement or disagreement with McKendree's position. The committee reported unfavorably, and the conference adopted its recommendation. Scripps was again elected to General Conference in 1824, and was one of a group, which also included Peter Cartwright, then a member of the Kentucky Conference, plotting the strategy to reinstate the suspended resolutions. Their plan was to keep silent until the matter came up for final approval, and then to unleash their ablest speakers. Some of the less stalwart supporters, however, took the silence to mean that support for the measure was dwindling, and when the vote came the bishop's prerogative to appoint the presiding elders was upheld.[59]

Returning in June to his pastoral appointment in St. Louis, Scripps continued in the ministry only until the following October. Whether the defeat of republican principles in the General Conference encouraged Scripps to make that choice is a matter for speculation. The careers of circuit riding preachers were typically short, and the constant traveling made it difficult to sustain a marriage and nearly impossible to support a family.[60]

He took a superannuate relationship to the Missouri Conference when it met near Lebanon, Illinois, in October, 1824, retiring from the rigors of constant travel on horseback after ten years of service, at age 39.[61] Within a month he married Agnes Corrie, of Corrieville, Wabash County, Illinois, the daughter of Scotch immigrants, and they set up housekeeping in Jackson, Missouri, a few miles from Cape Girardeau. The tanning and merchandising business had prospered under George Henry's management, and it was to this business that John returned after his retirement and marriage. George Henry has been elected a member of the Missouri constitutional convention in 1820, and in 1824 he went to Jefferson City as a member of the state legislature.[62]

John Scripps was not only a successful preacher, he also tried his hand at writing. Two of the earliest pieces the American Scrippses wrote for publication were "carrier's addresses" printed in the Jackson and Cape Girardeau papers. These poems traditionally recounted some of the more notable news items the paper had carried during the year just ended, and solicited gifts. One of these appeared in the *Independent Patriot* of Jackson, dated January 1, 1826, and in John Scripps' scrapbook copy signed "G. Scripps."[63] The other carrier's address can safely be assumed to be John Scripps' work.[64]

The second carrier's address in the scrapbook, which appeared in the *Jackson Mercury and Cape Girardeau Farmer* in January, 1830, may well represent John Scripps' introduction to the genre. Its style is less labored than that of the 1826 address, the tone is more humorous, and the form is considerably more complex. Concrete details also differentiate the style of the later poem from that of the earlier. The 1826 carrier boy promises, "There's no doubt but our sheets with much news will abound;/ You shall

have it right fresh, for I'll bring it with joy,"[65] but the 1830 carrier refers specifically to

> . . . that paper which I
> Bring each week to your houses, half wet and half dry,
> With news which from others we quote.[66]

The *Jackson Mercury and Cape Girardeau Farmer* was no doubt produced on a platen press of the Washington Hand Press style, printing one side of the paper at a time. The side printed first would have time to dry while the printers made ready to print the second side, but if the ink were still wet on one side when the patron received his paper, he knew it was fresh from the press. The carrier was not dalying on his route.

The 1830 poem furthermore demonstrates a wry humor and foreshadows some of the topics that were to be discussed at length 20 years later in John Scripps' editorials for the *Rushville Prairie Telegraph.* The fourth stanza of the 1830 carrier's address illustrates this humor and these topics:

> May the Mercury have News for each week through the year,
> Rich Subscribers the printers to pay.
> Advertisements sufficient expences to clear,
> Much original lore on its columns appear,
> And cash coming in every day.
> May our lawyers without litigation get wealth,
> Without patients Our Doctors get rich amidst health.
> May our preachers get converts to lead better lives,
> And Religion and Reason quell folly and madness,
> Mechanics and Merchants like bees in their hives,
> Be industrious and Skilful, and prosper with gladness,
> May our old maids get husbands, our Bachelors Wives,
> And all the wide World dispell sorrow and sadness
> And your Carrier Boy
> Find his pockets well worn
> With cash and give Joy
> At the next years return.[67]

Two sons and a daughter were born to John and Agnes Scripps at Jackson, and Scripps, who had long been opposed to slavery, decided not to raise his family in a slave state: ". . . I took a tour thro' Illinois in June, 1830, to seek a final residence and selected Rushville (where I now reside) as presenting the greatest inducements. It was a new place, containing about ten or a dozen families."[68] He purchased a corner lot on the town square for a store, and returned home to settle up his business in Jackson. In April, 1831, Scripps set out upriver, stopping in St. Louis to lay in a supply of merchandise, including best Havanna coffee, a hogshead of "segars," and "salt ground alum." The trip northward resumed on April 8th, with snow on the ground, as the steamboat *Victory* departed for Frederick, on the Illinois River a few miles from Rushville. John wrote to

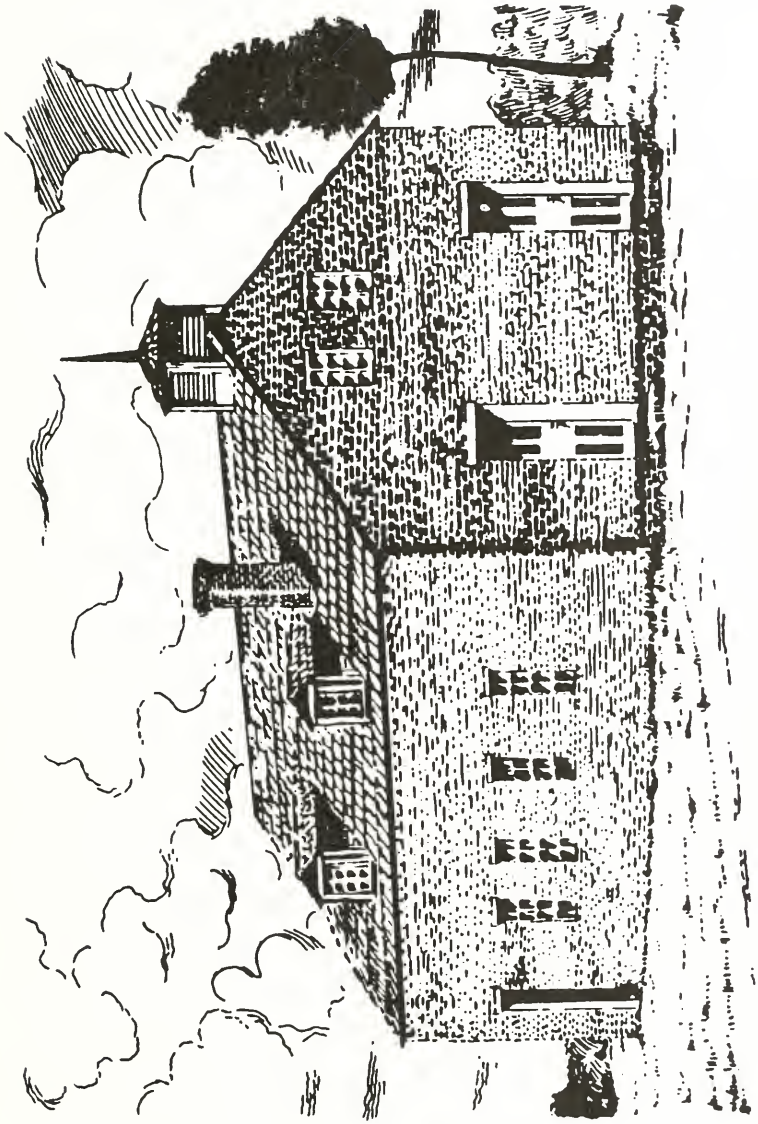
his brother from the boat, "I have shiped [sic] my all in this Boat — an assortment of merchandise — with all my goods & Chattels & Co. we shall start in the morning."[69]

Scripps immediately became involved in the affairs of Rushville, and when, on May 10, less than a month after Scripps had opened his store, a vote was taken to incorporate the village, he was elected one of the five trustees. Twenty-five years later Scripps told in his wry style how the early fathers met the requirement of 150 inhabitants for the founding of a town:

> Wanting to be somewhat consequential among ourselves the people conceived the idea of becoming a borough under the general law of the state recently passed granting the privilege to any town or village numbering a population of 150.
>
> Resolving to avail ourselves of the privilege, we set about like men, but had close work of it and such managing to make up the requisite number. Persevering and persistent, we enlisted in our enumeration every transient stranger, every human formed biped we could lay any claim to and even babies and every pigmy straddler, as it counted one was an acquisition. We had nearly failed. With most gum elastic stretching of our calculations, we could contrive only 149 into our list. But fortune favored the brave, so it does the persevering and so it did us. At this critical juncture while our every anxiety was on the stretch to call up some forgotten identity to fill that dreaded vacuum, down from Peoria, on their way to Alton, came two pedestrian knapsack tramps, bolting into the tavern and calling for a dram, which we believe the very patriotic landlord bribed them with to say they intended to become denizens of the place, if they could get "shopped," which they could not for they were tailors and there was no shop in the village. . . . Our prospective citizens could not get "shopped." But that was their business and not ours. We took their word for it.[70]

Doing business in Rushville was a difficult enterprise, especially since few of the farmers lived upon land they owned. Virtually all of Schuyler County had been granted in lots of 160 acres to veterans of the War of 1812, in return for their military service, and most sold their ground without ever seeing it. Scripps recalled, "The land . . . where settled was occupied by squatters having little money and scarcely produce for market." The impermanence of his clientele left Scripps vulnerable to incurring bad debts: ". . . after one of two years' residence they would sell and be gone in a night, and as my customers were dispersed over a large area of country, they would be gone to unknown regions a week or two before I could hear of it, and I lost thousands by it. . . ."[71] A partner convinced him to order goods from Philadelphia rather than St. Louis, and all the merchandise was lost "in the canal."[72] The widespread financial panic of 1837 led Congress to pass the bankruptcy law, which left Scripps holding a large number of uncollectable debts. The partner retired to his farm, and Scripps turned to the tanyard he and his brother had started when George had joined him in Rushville in 1832.

During the 1830's Scripps lent a good deal of energy to fostering the growth of the Methodist Church and Sunday School in Rushville.



The first Methodist Episcopal Church building in Rushville.

Methodist preacher Levin Green had held services in the cabin of Calvin and Nancy Hobart as early as 1823, and five years later a Methodist society was formed.[73] A Sunday School was organized in 1832, with both John and Agnes Scripps among the teachers, and when the congregation of the young church became too large for its regular meeting room, the Scrippses opened their home for worship. The church outgrew that arrangement, and Scripps fitted up a room in his store for its use. In the absence of regular preachers, John Scripps filled the pulpit. He helped lead a campaign to build a brick church in 1835 and remained as Sunday School superintendent for nineteen years.

Scripps' scrapbook contains three carrier's addresses from this period, written for three different short-lived Rushville newspapers, the *Rushville Journal,* 1836, the *Rushville Phoenix,* 1839, and the *Political Examiner,* 1841. Amid the wishes for the new year 1836, Scripps takes a sarcastic swipe at abolitionists and then turns his attention briefly to foreign affairs. The king of France wanted an apology from President Andrew Jackson, and Scripps suggested the monarch get his apology in "powder and ball" from"our backwoodsmen." Concerning the war with Mexico, he expresses this wish:

> And may Santa Anna most briefly rue
> His oppression of freedom so noble and true.

The tone of this poem is optimistic, as indicated by the vision of Illinois as the Garden of the West, inhabited by a happy and prolific citizenry:

> While wishing I'll wish that fair Illinois
> May be much better known than she's been;
> _____ bosom many millions of Freemen rejoice,
> Her prairies be covered with girls and with boys,
> As playful as ever was seen.[74]

The 1839 poem reflects in its somber mood the effects of widespread economic depression. The optimistic and playful talk about "fair Illinois," whose denizens are getting rich and having children, is gone. The form of the poem is less elegant. Scripps takes notice of the coronation of Queen Victoria, but his poem is preoccupied with more immediate concerns:

> Farewell to the year that has just flitted from us,
> The year eighteen hundred and thirty and eight;
> To thousands it opened with rays of bright promise,
> Who mourn'd ere its close, a dark premature fate;
> How many have perished by steam-boat disasters!
> How many once prosperous, are now desolate![75]

In 1842 Scripps sent six letters on early Methodism in the west to the *Western Christian Advocate*. The first of these appeared in the December 30, 1842, edition of that Methodist weekly, and three more were printed in January, 1843. The final two were published in March. The initial purpose, as Scripps described it, was to correct an earlier history of Methodism in

Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana that the *Advocate* had published, in which, he felt, Rev. Jesse Walker had been slighted. Scripps was in an especially good position to write this history, having been elected secretary of the Missouri Conference when it was set off from the Tennessee Conference in 1816, a position he held until his retirement from the ministry in 1824. As conference secretary he was required to keep meticulous records of the licensing of preachers and the circuits to which they were appointed, and he indicates that he kept duplicates of these records for his personal files. The *Advocate* articles give detailed descriptions of some of the itineraries these preachers kept, the rigors of their ministry, and Scripps' own ministerial career.

In Rushville, John Scripps was regarded as a patriarch of the Methodist Church, and was occasionally pressed into service as a preacher. No copies of his sermons are known to survive, but in 1843 his brother William Armiger Scripps reported on a camp meeting near Rushville at which John Scripps was one of the preachers. William had remained in England when the family emigrated, and he subsequently became the publisher of the *London Sun*. He visited Rushville in 1833 and 1843 and on his second visit wrote two letters which were published in the *Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres*, of which he was the editor. His letter dated August 14, 1843, describes the camp meeting:

> Hearing that Rev. John Scripps was expected to preach there at night, I rode to the camp towards evening; the ground was lighted with about a score of lamps, suspended from the trees, which, with the moon and two planets, that rose with great splendor, scattering their light through the foliage, sufficiently illuminated the camp; may I say also, that myriads of fire-flies added their not quite ineffectual rays. After prayers and singing, Mr. Scripps came forward and addressed an attentive congregation of about 1000 persons, some squatting or lying about on the grass, others sitting on benches, formed of rough planks laid across the trunks of trees. His text was St. John's Gospel, xv I, "I am the true vine;" and I was surprised with a burst of eloquence that I had never heard surpassed before, either in or out of the pulpit. His language was of the first rate, — correct and fluent, highly embelished with figure, epithet, quotations from Scripture and from the poets, and with a strength of voice that pervaded the most distant part of the camp. The whole discourse was strictly poetical, being delivered, as I might say, in blank verse; many passages were responded to by the shoutings of the congregation. He preached little short of an hour and a half, and concluded quite exhausted. When he concluded, more praying, exhorting, and singing followed, accompanied by the loud and unremitting shouts of the congregation, the preachers one and all urging sinners to conversion; and in due time several 'mourners,' as the new converts are called, came in and prostrated themselves on the earth with loud lamentations, tears and groans; some of the ministers administered consolation to them; whilst others, with stentorian lungs, urged more mourners to follow. This scene continued until midnight, and was not a little heightened by the unceasing chorus of tree-frogs, catadids, crickets, etc., which of themselves kept up a clamour very

> much resembling (but greatly more noisy) a number of Spitalfields looms in full action, — so loud, indeed, and so incessant, that you can form no conception of the noise they made.[77]

His wide experience as a frontier businessman and preacher had given John Scripps good reason to identify himself with the West, and as local and regional newspapers became more common, Scripps found an outlet for his reflections and opinions. His nephew, Benjamin Franklin Scripps, founded the *Prairie Telegraph* in 1848, putting out the first issue on July 8th. This was the first publication in Rushville that offered the prospect of bringing current news into print. Previous journals had existed primarily for the purpose of printing lucrative legal advertisements — tax rolls and legal notices — and what commercial advertising could be drummed up. The rest of the paper was filled with a few local items and articles clipped from the "exchanges." Newspaper editors at that time typically exchanged copies with other editors, and borrowed freely from each other's papers. The most recent news from Washington was likely to be a month old by the time it was passed from paper to paper and printed in Rushville.

The first telegraphic message received in Chicago was transmitted in 1848, and already there were plans for Rushville to be connected to the system. The main line of the Illinois & Mississippi Telegraph Company was to be built from St. Louis to Chicago via Jacksonville, and a branch line would extend from Jacksonville through Beardstown, Rushville, Mt. Sterling, Quincy and Burlington to Muscatine, Iowa. This line was opened early in 1849, but spring rains washed down many of the poles, and the operator at Quincy complained in April, 1849, that the line had not been in order more than two weeks in the previous two months.[78] Still, when it worked, the telegraph brought news within hours, rather than days, and broke the sense of isolation that had kept Rushville a part of the western frontier. When President Zachary Taylor died on Tuesday, July 9, 1850, the *Prairie Telegraph* reversed its rules, a newspaper custom that indicated mourning by creating a wide black line between columns of type, for its issue of Friday, July 12.

Benjamin suffered ill health, and sold the paper in October, 1849, to his uncle, Rev. John Scripps, and cousin, John C. Scripps. John Scripps the elder took responsibility for the editorial duties of selecting material to be printed and also writing original copy for the paper, while his son managed the production end. The *McDonough Democrat* confirmed this arrangement in its reference to the March 10, 1852, issue of the *Prairie Telegraph*, in which it mentions "our worthy and *venerable* senior, who presides over the editorial duties of the *Telegraph*."[79] There were only 280 subscribers to the paper, and the new management fell "hundreds [of dollars] short" in the first year. Pleas for subscribers to pay up were common, and on June 20, 1851, Scripps wrote, "Shingles of good quality and any amount will be taken for subscriptions, advertising or any work done in our office." Later in the year he announced that cheese could be traded for subscriptions.

There were other problems as well. On one occasion the paper was a day late because low water had delayed the supply of paper coming from St. Louis. All the type was set laboriously by hand, and the issue of February 4, 1853, didn't get out until the following Monday due to a "shortage of hands." Difficulties notwithstanding, "J. Scripps & Son — Editors" continued to publish every Friday from November 3, 1849, until December 31, 1856.

Unlike his contemporaries John Mason Peck, Timothy Flint, and Peter Cartwright, all preachers who became authors, John Scripps never recorded his experiences in a book.[80] When he and his son took over publication of the *Prairie Telegraph* in 1849, however, he began pouring forth a series of editorials and occasional poems that recorded his observations on a variety of subjects from women's fashions to the abolition of slavery. The collection of his newspaper writing also contains a few pieces that might be called literature, in that they do not exist for a purpose outside themselves and are intended to be intellectually and emotionally satisfying.

Under the name of the *Prairie Telegraph* each week on the front page appeared the slogan, "Neutral in Politics — Devoted to News, Commerce, Literature, Science, Morality, and Agriculture." That slogan outlined what Scripps' believed were the editor's duties. On May 28, 1852, the usual description of the current weather was missing from the editorial column. Scripps offered this explanation: "[We] have . . . occupied our weather space in serving them [the readers] dishes of what we tried to make ourselves believe they did not know, which we think is the principle province of a newspaper."[81]

The paper was a four-page affair, six columns to the page. Pages three and four mostly contained advertisements, some for local merchants, others for perveyors of books, tools, or remedies. Most of the advertisements repeated from week to week. On page one were items from the "exchanges" and literary offerings. There was always a short story, sometimes printed serially, and always with a moral. The issue of July 25, 1851, carried the first installment of "Cardillac the Jeweller: A Tale from the Germany of Hoffman," by E. T. Ellet. Sharing the front page was an article from the *Chicago Tribune* detailing the amounts of corn received at the Illinois-Michigan Canal, an item on "How to Kill Rats," and a report of the steamboat *Fashion* making a trip from St. Louis to Louisville in 42 hours. Editorials and local items were usually confined to page two.

One of the responsibilities Scripps took upon himself as editor was to serve as an arbitrator of literary taste, and in his editorials he occasionally reviewed and recommended books. One such was *The Two Brides*, by T. A. Arthur, presumably better than some other books it as "a story of real life":

> Its principle Character, the Heroine of the work, is a virtuous, but rather indiscreet female, suffering under the tyranny of a jealous, deceitful, vengeful, disipating, unprincipled Husband . . . . [It] is interesting, contains a good

> moral, and is just the book for the lover of light literature, to while away a leisure hour with.[82]

Two of his recommendations suggest that Rushville of the 1850's had an appetite for western adventure stories. *The Pioneer's Daughter* is described (September 12, 1851) as containing "savage warfare" and "feats of daring." *Clark Moreland, or Adventures in the Far West*, we are told (June 24, 1853), portrays an Indian captivity and rescue. Scripps made a comment concerning the latter book that indicates he felt novel reading was a female pastime. He says the book will hold the reader "till she sees the end."[83]

Local news items most often dealt with prospects of a good wheat harvest, a bushel of choice apples brought into the *Telegraph* office, or mud: "It is only sheer necessity that can possible induce us to set a foot off of our very accomodating plank or brick sidewalks."[84] Occasionally there was a report of a serious crime, as when the September 5, 1851, *Telegraph* told of "the atrocious murder of Elizabeth Shannon" by Frederick Hobart in McDonough County, "about 15 miles from this place . . . last Tuesday."[85]

Most of Scripps' writing was intended for "improvement or acquirement of useful knowledge," but occasionally a news story became an entertainment as well, as in this story about two escapees from a steamboat:

> The steamboat *Josiah Lawrence*, in her late trip from New Orleans to St. Louis, came up minus two of her most popular passengers, one, John Gray, the murderer of Henry Eberlin, in charge of the Sheriff of New Madrid. He jumped from the top of the wheel house, just above Cairo, with all his irons on and swam to shore, outran his numerous pursuers and escaped to the swamps; the other was a gentle-fish in the person of an Alligator 23 feet long, for whom some admirer of his alligatorship, had courteously taken his passage to St. Louis. — But whether is was that he thought there was not that respect paid him that should be, or that he disliked his fellow passengers, or his strong adherence to Southern principles, and aversion to nearing the line 36 30, or what, is unknown; but so it was, that after apparently considering the subject for some days, he finally came to the conclusion that it was no go; and no sooner resolved than executed; for in one moment his splendid and unique berth, composed of strong iron bars, was a mass of ruins on the deck; of which he took immediately, full possession; which was most respectfully conceded to him by all on board. After parading the deck for some time, taking various cognizances of all around him, he felt the boat; and out of pure respect for his alligatorship, no pursuit was made to detain him, as in the other case.[86]

Under Scripps' editorial hand, *The Prairie Telegraph* was a medium for dispersing such local news as word of deaths by cholera and uncoming concerts in the court house, as well as legal notices, wedding announcements, obituaries, and advertisements. In its pages, residents of Schuyler County were informed about political rallies and read transcripts

of speeches supplied to the *Telegraph* by either Whig or Democrat politicians. One notable example of this was the address by W. A. ("Old Dick") Richardson, an Illinois Congressman who had come to Rushville in 1834 and had lived there fifteen years before moving to Quincy. The April 9, 1852, issue reprinted on its front page his speech in the House of Representatives defending Stephan A. Douglas "against certain innuendoes thrown out by Mr. Brecinridge of Ky. in reference to the Hon. Senator's connection with the *Democratic Review.*"[87] The weekly paper was Rushville's window on the outside world, bringing news of a child murder by drunkenness, steamboat speed records and disasters, the prospects of railroads being built, and Jenny Lind fainting during a concert. Most of what Scripps printed, and nearly everything he wrote was intended in some way to boost the West — Illinois especially, and Rushville in particular.

Among the various comments and reminiscences that comprise Scripps' "editorials" for the *Prairie Telegraph* there is one short story. In "The Two Anniversaries and the Two Vows," Scripps recreates from the point of view of his fictional protagonist Nicholas Gwiggs a series of incidents stemming from an escapade attributed to his father, William Scripps. The story grows out of the convergence of Gwiggs' wedding anniversary and his birthday on succeeding days, and the divergent ideas he and his wife have about how to celebrate them. Gwiggs prefers the revelry of a drinking house, while his wife wants to share polite conversation with friends at home. Gwiggs is of two minds about his wife Bridget — he loves and respects her, but feels constrained by her preference for sedate entertainments.

Gwiggs tells how, fifteen years earlier, the celebrations of the two anniversaries brought about an important change in his life. He had spent the evening of his birthday drinking with friends, and returned home without incident. The next day, his wedding anniversary, was to prove eventful. He and Bridget and several of her mannerly friends went on a picnic, and on the way home one of the guests had a fit of hysterics. When wine was suggested as a cure, the party moved into a nearby saloon, where Gwiggs was more in his element. He poured drinks for everyone and imbibed several glasses of wine himself, putting himself in such a condition that Bridget would not let him kiss her, which brought on the first of the two vows: Gwiggs would kiss every woman and girl he met on the way home. Bridget subsequently made the second vow: she would never attend any more outdoor parties with him.

The kissing procession introduces the reader to an interesting succession of women one might have encountered on the streets of London in the late 18th or early 19th centuries — a servant, a milliner, a surly housewife, gentlewomen, street peddlers — who are portrayed against a backdrop of amused shopkeepers standing at their doorways, groups of rowdy boys, and Bridget's friends, who have set aside their propriety in the interest of watching Gwiggs keep his vow. Gwiggs meets his match in an

oyster woman who thrashes him, but the story ends happily when Gwiggs' rich uncle sees "the Gwiggs spirit" demonstrated in Nick and makes him his heir. With the inheritance, Gwiggs moves the family to Rushville, where they live happily ever after.

The use of this incident associated with William Scripps in family recollections, and the similarity of the names, identify the story as Scripps' work. The happy outcome reflects John Scripps' attitudes also. Since the story is built upon an incident in William Scripps' life, it is natural to speculate whether it may reveal something of the relationship between John Scripps' parents, and may reflect a tacit admiration of his father's conviviality. William Scripps had expressed an aversion to the "long-faced Methodists" though was later to join that church. John Scripps, the former circuit rider, fit in with the sober countenances, as indicated by his own description. In the January 16, 1852, *Prairie Telegraph* he writes of "our very grave, demure, and even forbiding features." This austere mien is reflected in his comments on the passage of a circus through Rushville:

> ". . . a large equestrian group passing into and promenading our village with nondescript carriages, elephants, ponies, music, and all the etceteras of a formidable show. Now we would not wish to be understood as approving of such immoral exhibitions . . . "

He goes on to relate that many persons had feared the show troupe would "drive the cholera into town before it, carry it in its midst, or bring it up in its rear," but his objection to the caravan was based "not on its physical, but its demoralizing effects."[88] Had John Scripps been one of the witnesses to the kissing escapade, we can be certain he would not have approved. It is somewhat surprising then, even in fiction, to find him writing, as a comment upon Bridget's friends, "I often wonder such folks don't die of their utter respectability." It is not the kind of comment one would expect from someone like Scripps, who expended a good deal of effort, both in and out of the ministry, promoting respectability.

At the time the story was written, however, Scripps' own morality had been called into question, and he had withdrawn from the Methodist Church. The matter is explained most clearly by James Leaton in his *History of Methodism in Illinois from 1793 to 1832.* Leaton writes that he knew Scripps well, visited him at his death bed, and preached at his funeral. Of Scripps' leaving the church, he writes,

> At the conference of 1848 his character was arrested on the ground that he had imprudently indulged in the use of intoxicating liquors. The matter was referred to his presiding elder, Dr. Akers, who investigated it, and concluded that there was no ground of complaint in the case. Mr. Scripps, on the recommendation of his physician and for a disease from which he suffered greatly, and which eventually caused his death, did of necessity use spiritous liquors, but only as a medicine. And so well satisfied was the presiding elder of the groundlessness of the charges, that he employed him for six months of

> the year to fill a vacancy in the station where he lived. But in 1850 his pastor, W. W. Mitchell, took such strong ground in opposition to him that he withdrew from the Church, and surrendered his ordination parchments to the conference.

He rejoined the church four years later, and remained a local preacher until his death.[89] If the source of the story was a Scripps family anecdote, the motivation for writing it may well have been this clash with Rev. Mitchell.

The bulk of Scripps' newspaper writing is commentary in which he addressed topics ranging from politics and world affairs to religion and fashion. His belief that the West represented both a great opportunity and a sacred mission gave birth to four recurring themes in his writing. First among these was the need to hold to true principles, like Protestant Christianity, and avoid fads such as bloomers, or humbugs. Mormonism, spiritualism, and Catholicism all fell into this category. A second theme was the use of science and skill to develop resources, and Scripps editorialized in favor of such practical things as plank roads and such esoteric ones as a tunnel from the Bay of Naples to quench the fires of Vesevius. He believed that America had a responsibility to present the world with a model for reform, and felt a need to counteract rabblerousers who by their emotional appeal for an end to slavery were interfering with more general progress. His most vituperative editorial was directed against Frederick Douglass, and he supported the American Colonization Society.

John Scripps' writing is an interesting resource for study of life and attitudes in pre-Civil War Central Illinois. Though his poetry is of ordinary quality, it is sometimes inventive and amusing, and reflects what was on the minds of rural Illinois folk — spirit rappings, telegraphy, American liberty compared to European despotism, and the slavery controversy. His best prose is vigorous and displays an engaging narrative style. Scripps made it his business to guide Illinois' development by encouraging such improvements as schools, roads and libraries.

Scripps lived nine years after selling the *Prairie Telegraph*. His nephews and grand-nephews continued the family publishing tradition in Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati and other cities, and Scripps himself lived to see the Civil War he dreaded begin and end. When he died on July 26, 1865, John Scripps left a group of writings that provide first-hand witness to some important experiences of Mississippi Valley pioneers, and bear the imprint of an active and articulate intellect.

NOTES

[1]*Northwestern Christian Advocate*, 29 May 1857 (in John Scripps' scrapbook, n. pag.).

[2]John Scripps, *1865 Registry of Events: Items of Earliest Recollections* (Springfield, Illinois: Privately printed, 1972), p. 1.

[3]James E. Scripps, *A Genealogical History of the Scripps Family and Its Various Alliances* (Detroit: Privately printed, 1903), p. 13.

[4]James S. Ogilvy, *Relics and Memorials of London Town* (London: Waverly Book Company, n.d.), p. 216.

[5]John Scripps' brother, William Armiger Scripps, became publisher of the London Daily *Sun*, and later editor of the *Literary Gazette*. In the United States, John Scripps' nephew, George Washington Scripps, left the *Schuyler Citizen* to work for the Detroit *Evening News*, and another nephew, John Locke Scripps, was a founder of the Chicago *Tribune* (later Lincoln's first biographer and postmaster of Chicago). A great-nephew, James E. Scripps, founded the Detroit *Evening News*, and had interests in newspapers in Cleveland, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Chicago. Another great-nephew, Edward Wyllis Scripps, participated in the founding of the Cleveland *Press*, Cincinatti *Post*, and St. Louis *Chronicle*, was part owner of 15 other newspapers, and founded the Associated Press.

[6]James E. Scripps, *Memorials of the Scripps Family: A Centennial Tribute* (Detroit: John F. Eby & Co., 1891), p. 5.

[7]James E. Scripps speculated that Grace Locke's father was a first or second cousin of the philosopher. James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 26.

[8]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 31.

[9]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 24.

[10]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 84.

[11]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 84.

[12]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 4.

[13]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, pp. 12, 13.

[14]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 5.

[15]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 3.

[16]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 3.

[17]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 3.

[18]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 5.

[19]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 6.

[20]John Scripps, *Recollections*, pp. 7, 8.

[21]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 8.

[22]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 9.

[23]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 10.

[24]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 8.

[25]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 6.

[26]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 9.

[27]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 10.

[28]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 10.

[29]James E. Scripps, *Memorials*, p. 66.

[30]John Scripps, "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 1), *Western Christian Advocate*, 30 Dec. 1842, p. 1.

[31]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 1).

[32]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 10.

[33]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 11.

[34]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 16. The text of Scripps' license to preach is reproduced in Charles Orrin Ransford, *John Scripps: Methodist Preacher — Newspaperman* (Shelbina, Mo.: privately printed, 1960), p. 16.

[35]John Scripps, *Recollections*, pp. 11, 12; "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 2), *Western Christian Advocate*, 6 Jan. 1843, p. 1.

[36]J. Gordon Melton, *Log Cabins to Steeples* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1974), p. 30.

[37]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 1).

[38]Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years in the Valley of the Mississippi* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), p. 163. Peter Cartwright also describes the religious effects of the earthquakes in his autobiography.

[39]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 12.

[40]John Scripps, *Recollections*, pp. 12, 13.

[41]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 2).

[42]John Scripps, "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 3), *Western Christian Advocate*, 13 Jan. 1843, p. 1. The 1968 edition of Flint's *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (cited above) contains illustrations of the mounds and of a cart of the type Scripps mentions.

[43]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 11 April 1851; *Scrapbook*, p. 52. The "two balls and lever" refer to the leather ink balls used to mix and apply ink to the type form, and the lever by which the pressman applied pressure.

[44]Roger J. Trienens, *Pioneer Imprints from Fifty States* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1973), pp. 44, 45.

[45]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 3); John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 10 March 1852; *Scrapbook*, p. 110.

[46]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 3).

[47]M. H. Chamberlin, *Centennial Anniversary of the Founding of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Illinois, at Shiloh* (A published address, originally delivered 14 Aug. 1907, privately printed), pp. 1-6, 10, 18.

[48]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 14.

[49]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 3).

[50]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 14.

[51]Chamberlin, p. 13; James Leaton, *History of Methodism in Illinois, from 1793 to 1832* (Cincinnati: Walden and Stowe [for the author], 1883), p. 120.

[52]John Scripps, "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 4), *Western Christian Advocate*, 20 Jan. 1843, p. 1.

[53]John Scripps, "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 5), *Western Christian Advocate*, 3 March 1843, p. 1.

[54]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 23 Jan. 1853; *Scrapbook*, p. 103.

[55]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 5).

[56]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 5).

[57]The other delegates to the 1820 General Conference from Missouri were Jesse Walker and S. H. Thompson. John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 5).

[58]Local preachers were licensed to preach only where they lived, unlike the ordained, traveling clergy. Ferderick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), pp. 175-178.

[59]John Scripps, "Early Methodism in the Far West," (No. 6), *Western Christian Advocate*, 10 March 1843, p. 1.

[60]Norwood, p. 139; Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, ed. W. P. Strickland, (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972r [first published 1856]), pp. 96-97, 111.

[61]John Scripps, "Early Methodism," (No. 6).

[62]John Scripps, *Recollections*, pp. 15, 16.

[63]John Scripps, *Scrapbook*, p. 4. Scripps family papers, Western Illinois University Libraries, Macomb, Illinois.

[64]Scripps was generally careful to make note of items in the scrapbook that were written by others, even identifying parts of columns "J. C. T." to indicate that his son, John Corrie Talbot Scripps, had written that portion. He also calls attention to a marriage or "hymeneal" verse that had appeared first in his newspaper, and later was used without crediting it to him, in a St. Louis paper, which he labeled as "plagiarism." John Scripps. *Prairie Telegraph*, 14 Jan. 1853; *Scrapbook*, p. 170. Because the distinction between what came from his own pen and those of others is important to Scripps, we can generally assume that what appears in the scrapbook (except at the beginning and end of the collection, where obviously later additions have been made) is Scripps' own work.

[65]George Henry Scripps, "Carriers Address," *Independent Patriot*, 1 Jan. 1826 (assumed), n. pag.; *Scrapbook*, p. 5.

[66]John Scripps, "Carriers Address," *Jackson Mercury and Cape Girardeau Farmer*, 1 Jan. 1830 (assumed), n. pag.; *Scrapbook*, p. 5.

[67]John Scripps, "Carriers Address," 1 Jan. 1830.

[68]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 16.

[69]Letter from John Scripps to George Henry Scripps, written on board "S.B. *Victory*, Port of St. Louis," 8 April 1831. Scripps family papers, Western Illinois University Libraries, Macomb, Illinois.

[70]Ransford, p. 61. Ransford here quotes from the *Prairie Telegraph*, but does not give the date.

[71]John Scripps, *Recollections*, p. 16.

[72]Presumably the Pennsylvania Canal, which opened in 1834 to carry freight and passengers via 606 miles of canals and portage railroad from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, where they could be shipped down the Ohio River.

[73]Leaton, James, *History of Methodism in Illinois from 1793 to 1832.*

[74]John Scripps, "Carriers Address," Rushville *Journal*, 1 Jan. 1836 (assumed), n. pag.; *Scrapbook*, p. 6.

[75]John Scripps, "Carriers Address," Rushville *Phoenix*, 1 Jan. 1839 (assumed), n. pag.; *Scrapbook*, p. 7.

[76]William Armiger Scripps, letter, dated 14 Aug. 1843, printed in *Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettre* (London), date of original publication unknown. Reprinted in Rushville *Times*, 9 Oct. 1929, p. 1.

[77]Ransford, p. 71.

[78]Robert Luther Thompson, *Wiring a Continent* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 131.

[79]Editorial, *McDonough Democrat*, n.d., in reference to *Prairie Telegraph*, 10 March 1852; *Scrapbook*, pp. 110-111.

[80]All three were active on the frontier of the Mississippi Valley during Scripps' ministry. Cartwright was a Methodist circuit rider, Peck a Baptist missionary, and Flint a Presbyterian minister.

[81]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 28 May 1852; *Scrapbook*, pp. 126-127.

[82]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 21 May 1852; *Scrapbook*, pp. 124-125.

[83]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 24 June 1853; *Scrapbook*, pp. 202-203.

[84]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 6 Feb. 1852; *Scrapbook*, pp. 104-105.

[85]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 5 Sept. 1851; *Scrapbook*, p. 83.

[86]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 26 July 1850; *Scrapbook*, pp. 14-15.

[87]Robert P. Howard, "Old Dick Richardson, the Other Senator from Quincy," *Western Illinois Regional Studies*, vol. VII, no. 1 (Fall 1984), pp. 18-21; John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 9 April 1852; *Scrapbook*, pp. 114-115.

[88]John Scripps, Editorial, *Prairie Telegraph*, 11 July 1851; *Scrapbook*, p. 76.

[89]Leaton, pp. 121-124.

LOG CABIN HOSPITALITY ON THE ILLINOIS FRONTIER

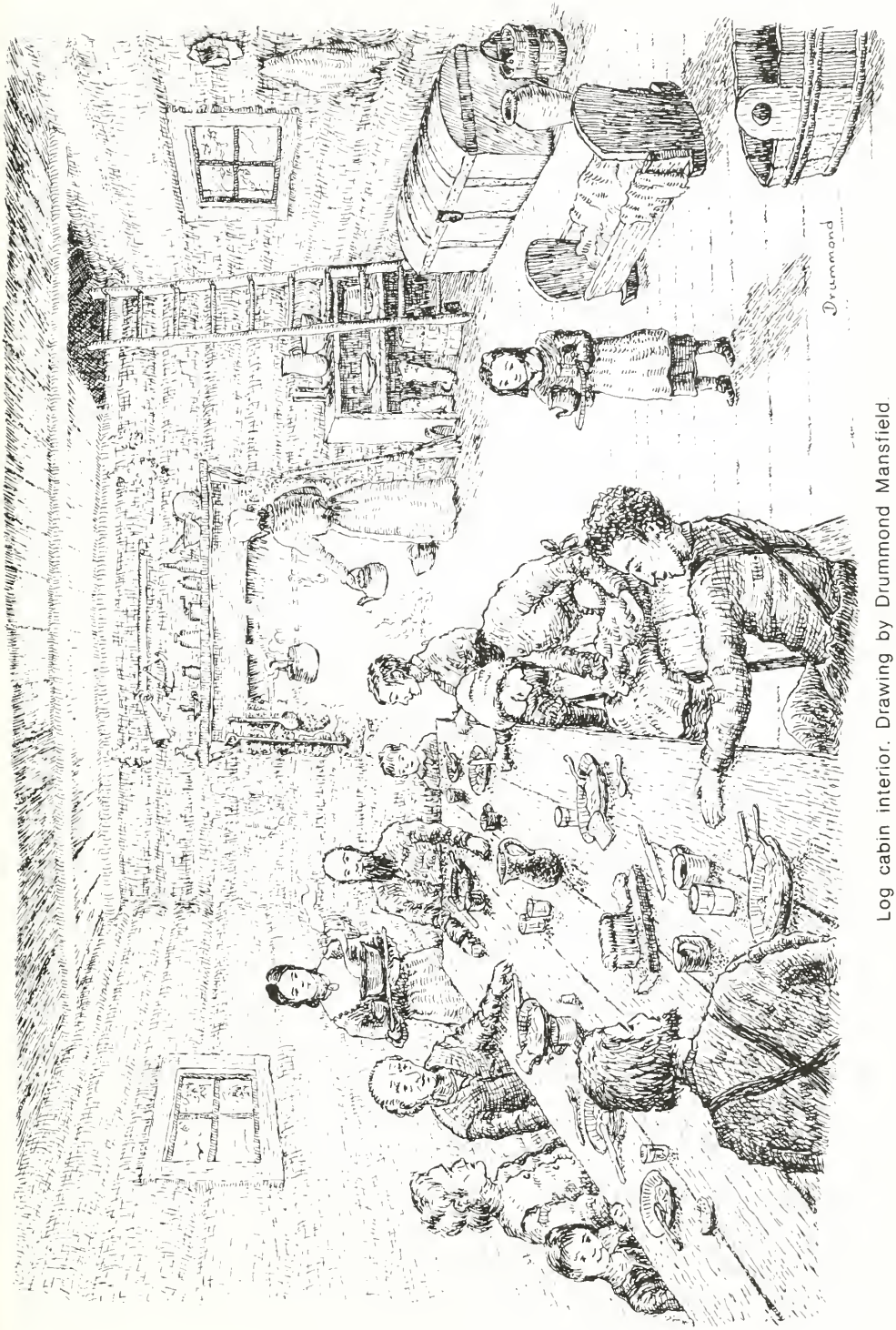
Rachael Ann Bottorff

Travelers on the frontier encountered a daunting variety of accommodations and hospitality as they plied the waterways and migration routes of the Midwest, the backwoods and the prairies. Such inns and taverns as there were, were situated mainly along waterways and overland trails leading toward opening territories. The pleasures and perils of commercial accommodations are related in fascinating detail by Harry Ellsworth Cole in his book, *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Northwest.*[1] The guests at such places tended to be commercial travelers who stuck mainly to the well-traveled routes, plying their trade as land speculators or salesmen of farm implements, pots and pans, calicoes and Bibles, and other goods and services that the developing frontier required.

But even before Illinois became a state, settlers were sweeping in by the thousands to claim free or inexpensive land. Those seeking homesteads and farms in the unsettled areas of Illinois pushed off the beaten path and there, on the edges of civilization, they were forced to rely on the hospitality of private householders. Such arrangements have not often been studied, but they represent an illuminating aspect of the Illinois pioneer experience.

The wayfarer could expect to encounter two kinds of accommodations: if he stopped at the home of a prosperous Yankee farmer he was likely to find a neat and tidy cabin offering all the amenities that frontier life afforded — even, perhaps, a curtain around the bed where one could retire in relative privacy. At the cabin of a backwoodsman, newly arrived from Tennessee or Kentucky, the guest might be given sleeping-space on the floor and the plainest of food, but the spirit in which it was offered was no less cordial than in more graciously appointed homes. While the traveler's reception might vary from cool to hearty, the frontier hostess seldom turned away requests for food and shelter.

There she was in her one-room log cabin, in the middle of nowhere, when she heard the shout: "Hello the house!" That was good manners in frontier times, and the traveler did not alight from his horse, wagon or carriage until someone inside responded. If the hostess was lucky, all the traveler sought was a meal for himself and feed and water for his horse. If



Log cabin interior. Drawing by Drummond Mansfield.

a storm was coming on, she might find herself swamped with wayfarers. Even without a storm, it was not unusual to find part of a wagon train pulling up to one's doorstep.

Take the case of Timothy Harris, who lived in a stout little cabin that was about twelve feet square, situated at the foot of some bluffs, probably in Mason County, about six miles east of the Illinois river. The year was 1822. At the time, it was the farthest outpost of the westward migration. Or so said Chauncey Hobart, one of the great circuit riders of the Methodist Church. In his memoirs, written many years later, Hobart recalls that Mr. Harris already had nine guests when the Hobart party arrived. There was a Mr. Brown (not further identified) and Mr. and Mrs. Ephram Eggleston and their six children. Then came Chauncey's parents and their four children in one wagon and, in the second, Chauncey's grandmother and grandfather Norris, Miss Ruth Powers and their driver, William Hobart Taylor. That was twenty people, counting Mr. Harris. "That night," Hobart remembered, "the floor of the little cabin was actually covered with beds, and these only accommodated about half the company. The other half finding shelter in the wagons."[2] Two days later, Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Eels arrived with their seven children, making a total of twenty-nine. In addition, there were three hundred Potawatamie Indians camped out along a creek just above the house.

The first desperate need was food, specifically bread. So, the families gathered twenty bushels of corn and loaded it into a wagon, and Mrs. Hobart and one of her sons drove sixty miles back along the trail to have the corn ground at a horse-powered mill. The trip took four days. During that time, Harris and his guests were busy erecting a double log cabin. Two days after the wagon got back with the corn meal, the Hobarts and Norrises were installed in their new homes. The other travelers presumably continued on their way, leaving the hospitable Mr. Harris with the three hundred Potawatamies for company.

Late in that same year, Christiana Holmes Tillson arrived in southern Illinois as the bride of John Tillson, a prosperous land agent headquartered near Edwardsville. A New Englander of education and refinement, she soon found herself the victim of the Sunday visit. The breakfast dishes would no sooner be cleared away than "a back-woodsman would walk in with a big baby on his arm, followed by his wife with the youngest in both her arms, would introduce his lady, and let us know they had come for a day's visit; thinking I was 'strange ones 'ere,' they reckoned they ought to get acquainted."[3] By the time three months had passed, Mrs. Tillson had satisfied the curiosity of her neighbors and had tactfully declined to return the invitations to visit, explaining that she and her husband did not go calling on the Sabbath.

She had also learned what supplies to lay in to accommodate the traffic. She bought beef by the quarter or the carcass and set to work preparing it

Christina Holmes Tillson

for use. "A part would be salted down to be used for corn beef when the fresh had been eaten; the pieces for roast and steak set apart; the fat about the kidneys carefully picked out and put to dry for suet, and the remainder made into 'collared' or 'pressed beef;' the round made into 'hunter's beef,' and shins hung up in a cool place for soup."[4]

In good times, the pioneers ate well. Root cellars were stocked with vegetables, the woods were full of game, and ponds and creeks provided a variety of fish and waterfowl. There were berries and nuts in abundance and if a bee tree could be found, honey. The garden produced turnips, carrots, squash, cabbages, onions, greens, beans, potatoes and corn. Corn was especially important since it could be processed into bread, grits, mush, pudding, hominy, pancakes and whisky. Corn could even be parched and turned into a kind of coffee if times were lean, though one pioneer reported that she made "delicious coffee" from dried carrots.

Such stores and trading posts as there were provided little help, for they sold only a few staples — coffee, tea, sugar, salt and wheat flour. The rest of the inventory consisted of farm implements, harness, a few bolts of calico, and whiskey by the barrel or by the jug.

Few pioneers could afford to have ovens built into their fireplaces, so cooking and baking were done over an open fire. Heavy cast iron pots and pans were usually made with tight-fitting lids so that coals could be heaped around and on top of them, providing small individual "ovens." Larger pots, sometimes weighing as much as 40 pounds, were lofted onto hooks suspended over the fire and the main meal was likely to be a stew made with whatever meat, game and vegetables were on hand.

If the larder was well-stocked, the hostess might ask the traveler whether he preferred "chicken and fixin's" or "common doin's." The former was an elaborate meal with perhaps, chicken and dumplings, a meat dish, vegetables, condiments, hot breads and pie or cake. If a hostess was caught short on provisions, she could always fall back on corn bread, fatback (bacon) and dried beans. That was "common fixin's," and for this repast, she expected payment of "one bit." The more elaborate meal was expected to bring the pricely sum of "two-bits" or 25 cents, and the cash was welcome in what was essentially a barter society. Eight such meals, could, in most cases, pay for an acre of land.

Rebecca Burlend, an immigrant from England, experienced frontier hospitality both as a guest and as a hostess. Before she migrated from England to southern Illinois with her husband and five children, she had never been more than forty miles from home. And she found the manners and mores of her new country curious in the extreme. A man, she observed, is always addressed as 'sir,' "however slender his pretensions to knighthood; a woman as madam." The Burlends' hosts for the first three days in Illinois were a Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, and "the little lady" was "exceedingly fond of smoking, as Americans generally are, particularly the females."[5]

The Philipses made it clear that the Burlends were expected to pay for their accommodations, and although the cabin was somewhat more commodious than most, Rebecca was critical of its appearance. She thought the practice of placing a bed in the room in which the fire was kept "invariably gives both the bed and house a filthy appearance," and she thought it untidy to stack farm implements in the corner. She noted with interest, however, the variety of medicinal herbs, dried, and hanging from the ceiling, the smoke-blackened hams and bacons suspended from the rafters, and the three or four large pots of honey stored beneath the bed.

Dining had its peculiarities. "It is not etiquette in Illinois to sit at table after you have done eating," she noted. To remain after one had finished the meal implied that he had not had enough to eat. "This custom," she sniffed, "I subsequently found a very convenient one."

Her first company dinner was given one Sunday in honor of another English immigrant who had preceded the Burlends into Illinois. In an effort to make it a special occasion, Rebecca sent her husband into the woods on Saturday to shoot a turkey, a notoriously agile bird which escaped all but the wiliest hunters. She was elated when her husband returned with his prey and quickly dressed it for the meal. On Sunday morning, Rebecca dropped it into a pot of boiling water, and when the guest arrived, proudly informed him of the treat in store. "He was surprised at our story," she related, "as those birds are difficult to obtain with a common fowling-piece, and desired to see the feet and head. But the moment he saw them, he exclaimed, 'it's a buzzard,'" a bird which feeds on carrion and is unfit for human consumption. "Our turkey," she sighed, "was hoisted into the yard, and we were obliged to be content with a little bacon, and a coarse Indian corn pudding."[6]

While Rebecca was dealing with the vicissitudes of life in southern Illinois, Juliette Kinzie was preparing for quite a different lifestyle in Fort Winnebago, Wisconsin, where her husband, John, was the Indian Agent. Juliette was a member of a wealthy and well-educated New England family and came west on her honeymoon, fired with enthusiasm for life on the frontier. Most of her furniture was soaked and peeling when it arrived by boat, but her beloved piano—one of the first in the wilderness—escaped damage. As she recalled, "When the pretty sideboard and worktable had been thoroughly rubbed and set up, and all the little knickknacks arranged on the mantel-piece—when the white curtains were hung at the windows, and the chairs and dining-table each in its proper place in relation to the piano, our parlor was pronounced 'magnificent.'"[7]

Her husband promptly invited six guests to dinner. "So unexpected—so unprepared for?" Juliette gasped. "Never mind," he told her, "give them anything you have. They have been living for some days in tents," and a hot meal, prepared by a skilled cook, would be a treat, indeed. As it happened, Juliette already had a venison pie steaming in the oven. It was a large one — that being the only size baking pan she had unpacked. "Thus,

Juliette Kinzie

with some trifling additions to the bill of fare, we made out very well, and the master of the house had the satisfaction of hearing the impromptu dinner very much commended by his six guests."[8]

Friendly Indians often posed a problem to frontier hostesses. They would frequently enter without knocking and silently examine all the furniture, cupboards and drawers in the house. They would then leave as unceremoniously as they had arrived, sometimes taking with them an item that had caught their fancy.

During her first Christmas holiday at Fort Winnebago, Juliette invited a group of Indian matrons into her parlor. "They seated themselves in a circle on the floor, and I was sorry to observe that the application of a little soap and water to their blankets had formed no part of their holiday preparations."[9] She passed the first squaw a platter of "nice brown crullers, over which I had grated, according to custom, a goodly quantity of white sugar." To Juliette's surprise, the woman poured all the cakes into her blanket and handed back the platter. Juliette refilled it and passed it to the second woman, who did the same. The supply of crullers being finite, Juliette was wondering what to do next when one of the first two women licked her fingers: "Tah-nee-zhoo-rah!" (Sugar!) was her delighted exclamation, and they all broke out into a hearty laugh; it is needless to say that the cakes disappeared with all the celerity they deemed compatible with good-breeding." The women had never seen white sugar before and, supposing it to be salt, hesitated to taste it.

Juliette was not only an intrepid hostess, she was an inveterate traveler, often making the journey between Fort Winnebago and Chicago with her husband. On one such trip, she and Kinzie spent a night with a Mr. Knaggs, who already had a blind Indian and several other men as guests. "The only thing Mr. Knaggs could furnish in the shape of bedding was a small bearskin. The bunk was a trifle less filthy than the floor, so upon its boards we spread first the skin, then our saddle-blankets, and with a pair of saddle-bags for a bolster, I wrapped myself in my cloak, and resigned myself to my distasteful accommodations . . . but sleep I could not. Even on a softer and more agreeable couch, the snoring of the old Indian and two or three companions who had joined him, and his frequent querulous exclamations as he felt himself encroached upon in the darkness, would have effectually banished slumber from my eyes. It was a relief to rise and prepare for the journey of the day."[10]

With John Regan, the problem was not people, but chickens. Regan was a Scotsman who settled near Ellisville in 1842. On a horseback trip to Henry county, he arrived late one afternoon at a backwoods cabin and asked for accommodations for the night. The host—disgruntled over the theft of a horse the day before—was about to turn him away when the wife intervened and invited him in for supper. When bedtime came, however, the only facility available was the hen house. Consoling himself with Ben Johnson's observation that "in this world, there is more to be endured than enjoyed," he settled down among the clucking chickens. "The candle

once out, and darkness reigning around, my feathered friends became more orderly . . . and I fell asleep."[11]

Travelers complained bitterly about the hordes of insects that plagued their every step. William Oliver, who wrote of his travels in Illinois in the early 1800s, said "The whole earth and air seems teeming with them, and mosquitoes, gallinippers, bugs, ticks, sand-flies, sweat-flies, ants, cockroaches, etc., join in one continued attack against one's ease."[12] Outside, savage swarms of mosquitoes attacked every inch of exposed skin, and inside, "molasses, sugar, preserved fruit, bread, everything on the table, is loaded with them, and the very operation of fanning them off drives numbers of them into the molasses and other things of adhesive nature. It is not safe to open your mouth."[13]

The mosquitoes accounted for the ague, a malarial fever that afflicted nearly every settler, and Oliver tells of stopping overnight in the cabin of a family of eight, every member of which was "either lying in fever, or just recovering from it." The host admitted the family was in "pretty considerable of a bad fix," but generously laid a fire in an empty, unfurnished end of the log house and offered Oliver and his companions a supper of "rancid bacon, coffee burnt as black as charcoal, and Indian bread compounded with the dripping of the bacon." The guests had no more than settled down for the night when another contingent of travelers arrived, so many that they covered the entire floor of the vacant end of the cabin. "I lay down with my clothes on," Oliver relates, "but what with the moaning of a poor girl who was lying in fever, and the screaming of a restless child, to sleep was out of the question, and in a short time I arose with the intention of going out a little. The folks on the floor had made their arrangements in the dark, so I did not know how they were situated, and my first step was made at a venture. I scarcely could have been less fortunate, as I stepped plump on the child which had already created so much disturbance . . . and was glad to make my escape on all fours."[14]

Not all encounters proved to be so traumatic. New England journalist Harriet Martineau tells of arriving at an inn at Joliet, Illinois at eleven o'clock at night, soaked to the skin from a hazardous river crossing. The inn was full, and Harriet and her party were prepared to sleep in the barn. But while they were having a glass of milk at the bar, the innkeeper's wife "had risen and dressed herself, put clean sheets on her own bed, and made up two others on the floor of the same room; so that the ladies and Charley (Harriet's son) were luxuriously accommodated." When Harriet went to thank the innkeeper's wife the next morning, "she said she thought that people who could go to bed quietly every night ought to be ready to give up beds to tired travelers."[15]

One of the most indefatigable travelers on the early frontier was the Rev. Peter Cartwright, a fierce and fiery Methodist circuit rider, whose career spanned more than fifty years. His circuits often extended as much as six hundred miles from end to end and he was expected to make the circuit four times a year. Services were usually held in the cabins of his flock and

preparations for his visits began days ahead. The cabins were scrubbed and polished; the best feather bed was fluffed and put in order, and a stock of food was laid in for the picnics and dinners that followed the services. Green coffee would be parched, fresh butter churned, pies, cakes and cookies baked. A ham or roast would be prepared for cooking and fresh bread set to bake. The circuit rider was a welcome guest, for he brought not only news of the outside world, but a ringing hope of salvation, and a renewal of ties to the life they had left behind.

Cartwright felt at home in the rudest of cabins, but he had no patience with penuriousness. A "certain brother" had hoarded up three hundred dollars—this at a time when Illinois farmland could be acquired for two dollars an acre or less—but "there was but one chair in the house, and that was called the preacher's chair. The bottom was weak and worn out, and one of the upright back pieces was broken off. He had a hewed puncheon for a table, with four holes in it, and four straight sticks put in for legs. The hearth was made of earth, and in the center of it was a deep hole, worn by sweeping. Around this hole the women had to cook, which was exceedingly inconvenient, for they had no kitchen. When we came to the table there were wooden trenchers for plates, sharp-pointed pieces of cane for forks, and tin cups for cups and saucers. There was but one knife besides a butcher's knife, and that had the handle off. Four forks were driven down between the puncheons into he ground; for bedsteads, cross poles or side poles put in those forks, and clapboards laid crosswise for cords."

"Now, if the brother had been really poor," Peter continued, "I could have excused everything; but, knowing that he had money hoarded up, I thought it my duty to speak to him on the subject." And speak he did. When Peter returned on his next visit "the hole in the hearth was filled up, two new bedsteads were on hand, six new split-bottom chairs were procured, a new set of knives and forks, cups and saucers, and plates, were all on hand. The women met me very pleasantly, and the old brother himself looked better than usual; and besides all this, the women all had new calico dresses, and looked very neat."[16]

Cartwright was a tea drinker and always carried a few sacks of tea leaves in his saddle bags. On one trip into the wilderness he gave his hostess his bag of tea and asked her to prepare some for his supper. Alas, the poor lady had never seen tea before so she boiled it as she would have boiled dandelion greens; threw out the water and dished up the dregs.[17]

Entertaining sometimes proved to be a dubious relief from the isolation of the frontier cabin. Tillson relates that during the first four-and-a-half years of her residence, while she entertained an endless stream of visitors and hangers-on, she spent only six days as the guest of others and made only three visits outside her neighborhood. Ministers, especially, made her home their "depot," she recalled. Burlend regarded most of her neighbors as crude and uncouth, yet those same "backwoodsmen" who arrived uninvited for the Sunday visits, gathered unbidden at her side to sit out an

attempt to preempt her farm. Together, they won. Even Kinzie, aided and protected by the staff at Fort Winnebago, often found herself dismayed by the volume and manners of her Indian guests. One suspects that when the frontier housewife heard the cry "Hello the house" she may sometimes have hidden quietly behind the door, savoring her solitude.

NOTES

[1]Harry Ellsworth Cole, *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Northwest*, (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1930).

[2]Chauncey Hobart, D. D., *Recollections of My Life*, (Red Wing, Minn.: Red Wing Printing Co., 1885), p. 38.

[3]Christiana Holmes Tillson, *A Woman's Story of Pioneer Life* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1919), pp. 103-05.

[4]Ibid., p. 149.

[5]Rebecca and Edward Burlend, *A True Picture of Emigration* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1968), p. 45.

[6]Ibid., p. 74.

[7]Mrs. John H. Kinzie, *WAU-BUN The 'Early Day' in the Northwest*, (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1932), p. 107.

[8]Ibid., p. 108.

[9]Ibid., pp. 128-31.

[10]Ibid., pp. 457-59.

[11]John Regan, *The Emigrant's Guide to the Western States of America: or Backwoods and Prairies*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Tweedale Court, 1852), p. 275.

[12]William Oliver, *Eight Months in Illinois*, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), p. 76.

[13]Ibid., p. 77.

[14]Ibid., pp. 103-04.

[15]Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, (New York: Saunders & Otley, 1873), p. 43.

[16]*Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), pp. 169-70.

[17]*Augusta's Story*, compiled by the Martha Board Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (Augusta, Ill.: Augusta Eagle, ca 1919), pp. 178-79.

ILLINOIS CITY: 150 YEARS ON THE PRAIRIE[1]

Clarence A. Andrews

The two hundred or so residents of Illinois City, a hamlet on the flat prairie adjoining the Mississippi River bluffs in western Rock Island County, in 1987 will have the opportunity to celebrate the town's sesquicentennial anniversary. True, some residents looking about at the scattering of homes, or the miniscule business district stretched out along Illinois Highway 92, the town's "Main Street," might wonder what there was to celebrate. "This isn't New York City or Oklahoma City or Kansas City," one commented. But Illinois City has at least endured, which is more than one can say for former settlements in western Rock Island County—Wrayville, Richmond, Foster, Brunsville—and Drury's or Van Atta's "landings" on the river.

White activity along this section of the Mississippi began even before Black Hawk's defeat in 1832. As early as 1823, the first steamboat, the Virginia, had made its way upstream to Galena, and by 1832, a score of steamboats were carrying supplies upriver to the lead mines at Galena and carrying lead downriver to St. Louis.[2] Fort Armstrong and other forts on the river needed supplies and occasional reinforcements as well. But inland there was little activity. In 1830 there were fewer than two persons per square mile in Rock Island County and in 1840 not more than six.[3]

In the early summer of 1832, William Cullen Bryant, the New England poet, described the Illinois country:

> The forests are of very large growth, and contain a greater variety of trees than are common to the eastward. The soil of the open country is fat and fertile, and the growth of all the vegetable tribes is rapid and strong to a degree unknown in your country [the East]. There is not a stone, a pebble, or bit of gravel in all these prairies. A plow lasts a man his lifetime, a hoe never wears out, and the horses go unshod. Wild plums grow in large thickets with a profusion of fruit. . . . The earth in the woods is covered with May-apples not yet ripe, and in the enclosed prairies with large fine strawberries . . . . The prairie and the forest have each a different set of animals. The prairie-hen, as you walk out, starts up and whirs away from under you, but the spotted prairie-squirrel hurries through the grass, and the prairie-hawk balances

> himself in the air for a long time over the same spot. While observing him we heard a kind of humming noise in the grass. . . . We dismounted, and found that it was made by a prairie-rattlesnake which lay coiled around a tuft of herbiage . . . . A little farther on, . . . we saw a prairie-wolf in the path before us, a prick-eared animal of a reddish-gray color, standing and gazing at us with great composure.[4]

Such was the prairie Eden which Bryant saw through his naturalist eyes. But others who came to the prairie saw the land otherwise. They were, said novelist Herbert Quick, "speculators, missionaries, land-hunters, merchants; criminals escaping from justice; couples fleeing from the law; families seeking homes; the wrecks of homes seeking secrecy; gold-seekers . . . politicians . . . editors . . . adventurers . . . lawyers . . . abolitionists . . . and most numerous of all, home-seekers 'hunting country,' a nation on wheels, an empire in the commotion and pangs of birth."[5]

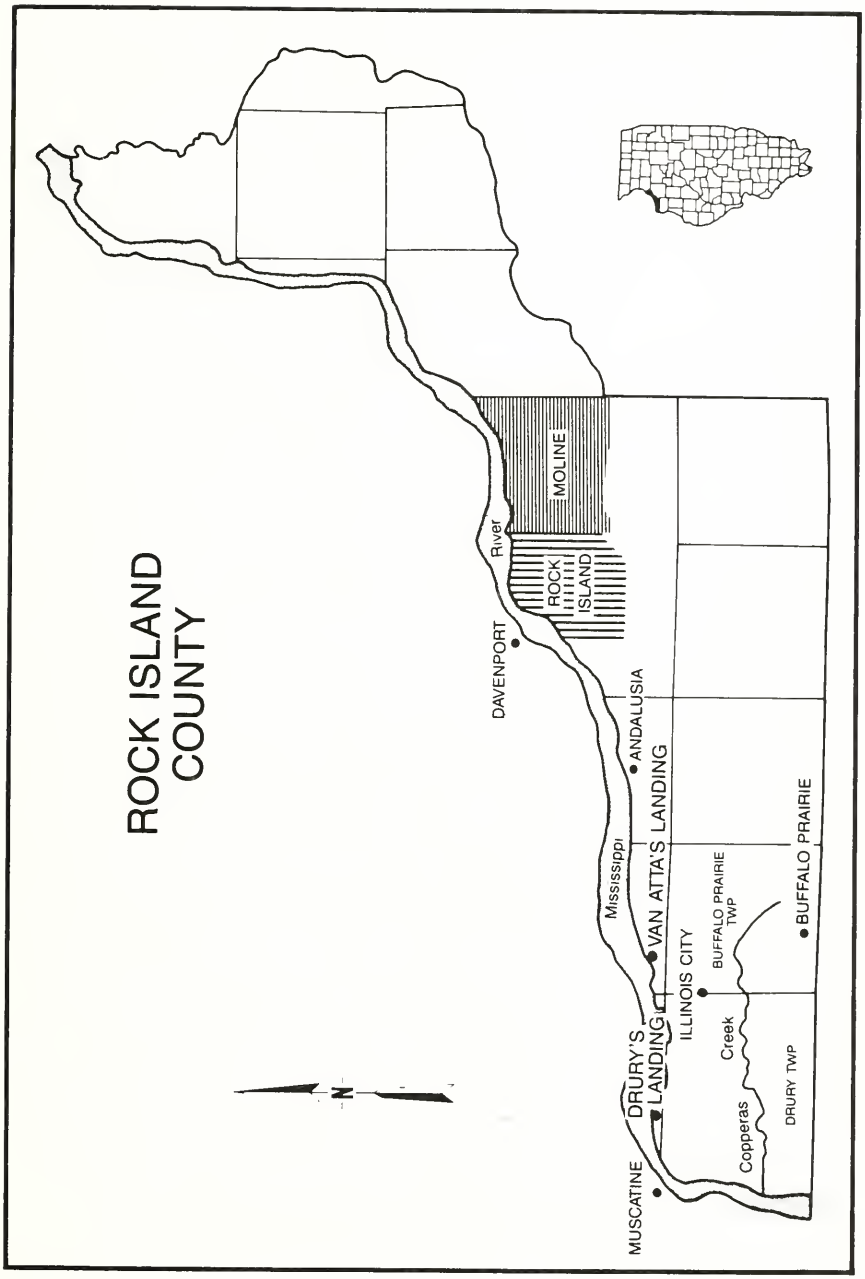
As the settlers came to western Illinois, some, like Valentine Fuhr, who took up land in present-day Buffalo Prairie Township in Rock Island County, became farmers. Others took up residence in "landings." These were riverside settlements created by the advent of the steamboat, places where cargo or passengers might be set ashore or taken on, or where wood for the ship's boilers could be had.

By 1837, two landings had been built near the present site of Illinois City, Drury's Landing five or six miles downriver and Van Atta's Landing about a mile upriver.

Van Atta's Landing was probably established by members of an immigrant German family whose name is prominent in area records and histories, though in a variety of spellings. Not much is known about them. Benjamin and Gorham (or Gresham) Van Atta were members of the Rock River Rangers in 1831 and took part in skirmishes with Black Hawk and his followers. Another Van Atta, John, from Rock Island, in 1836 with Benjamin Clark surveyed and platted a part of the "Macoutin Prairie" of Iowa which later became Muscatine. He was associated with Col. George Davenport in this and other enterprises.

More is known about Drury's Landing which had a longer history. The Drury family is prominent in the area's history, and Rock Island County's westernmost township is named for its pioneer members. About 1835 or 1836, Isaiah Drury and sons Silas, Miles, William Reynolds (commonly called "Reynolds"), James and Eli came to the area. The land was totally undeveloped and covered, especially on the river bluffs, with a dense forest.[6]

Isaiah Drury was born in Baltimore, Maryland in December of 1778, and settled at New Lancaster, Ohio in 1800. There he built the town's first house. In 1811 he moved to Indiana. He served in the Maine militia in 1813 and was given a warrant for eighty acres of government land.[7] Silas Drury, who had come west before the others, had served in the Black Hawk War and had a government warrant for forty acres of land.[8]


ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
MOLINE
ROCK ISLAND
River
DAVENPORT
ANDALUSIA
LANDING
Mississippi
VAN ATTA'S
BUFFALO PRAIRIE
BUFFALO PRAIRIE TWP
ILLINOIS CITY
Creek
DRURY'S LANDING
DRURY TWP
Copperas
MUSCATINE
N

Isaiah and Silas built a grist mill and a saw mill, and had a wool carding machine on Copper[as] Creek several miles southwest of the present site of Illinois City, and about four miles south of Drury's Landing. However, a town did not develop from this enterprise. By 1846, settlers were taking their grain to Moline to be ground.

Although it is likely that Drury's mill was not dependable (spring freshets would wash out the brush dams many mill owners constructed, and low water and the winter freeze made them unusable at other times of the year), there were other reasons this business venture failed. M. J. McEniry wrote in 1914 that "Rock Island County [was] not the best crop-producing ground or in great demand by agriculturists," thus suggesting that local mills such as the Drury's would not have had enough grain to keep them busy.[10] Allan G. Bogue seems to support this with two quotations from writers of the 1830s that "prairie soils were too fertile for wheat, the major grain crop of those times."[11]

But the more important reason for taking grain to Moline was that a dam had been built across the Mississippi between the river's east bank at "Rock Island Mills" and Arsenal Island, and a saw mill and flouring mill had been built there in 1841. These mills had a more dependable source of water power than interior streams would provide and, moreover, were located in a market town close to the County Courthouse. When "Rock Island Mills" was platted in 1843, its name was changed to "Moline" (from the French *moulin*, mill) because the place was a "mill town."[12]

Drury's Landing had a more successful and longer history than the Drurys' mill. In 1899, John McGreer, who had been born there, described the place:

> "Muscatine had at one time a remarkably lively competitor trade, only two and a half miles [upstream] on the Illinois side of the River.[13] Drury's Landing (familiarly known as the "Landin'" or the "P[o]int" was the competitor. . . . William Reynolds Drury was its founder, general merchant, grain, produce and stock buyer, a merchant whose credit was good for all he wished to buy in Cincinnati, New Orleans and St. Louis. (Chicago wasn't in it then.) He bought most everything the farmers had to sell. Those without money he trusted till they got or raised a crop; gave credit from one crop to another; bought as much produce as all [Muscatine] did from Illinois.
>
> Upriver steamboats would leave barges for loading which would be filled to the gunwales, ready to hitch on and be towed south on the return trip. All boats stopped there either to load or unload freight or take on boat supplies. He had wood yards on the river bank, a large ice house and cold storage room combined. In winter he bought and traded for wild game, deer, turkeys, prairie chickens, [quail], etc., put them in the cold storage room and on the opening of navigation he shipped them to southern markets."[14]

The woodyards were supplied from pine trees which grew on the "Pine Bluffs" above the Landing. McGreer's comment that "Chicago wasn't in it then" is not only a reference to Chicago's small size at the time, but also to the fact that the Mississippi River was the most important traffic artery

at the time and that river traffic was faster, cheaper and more reliable than overland traffic.

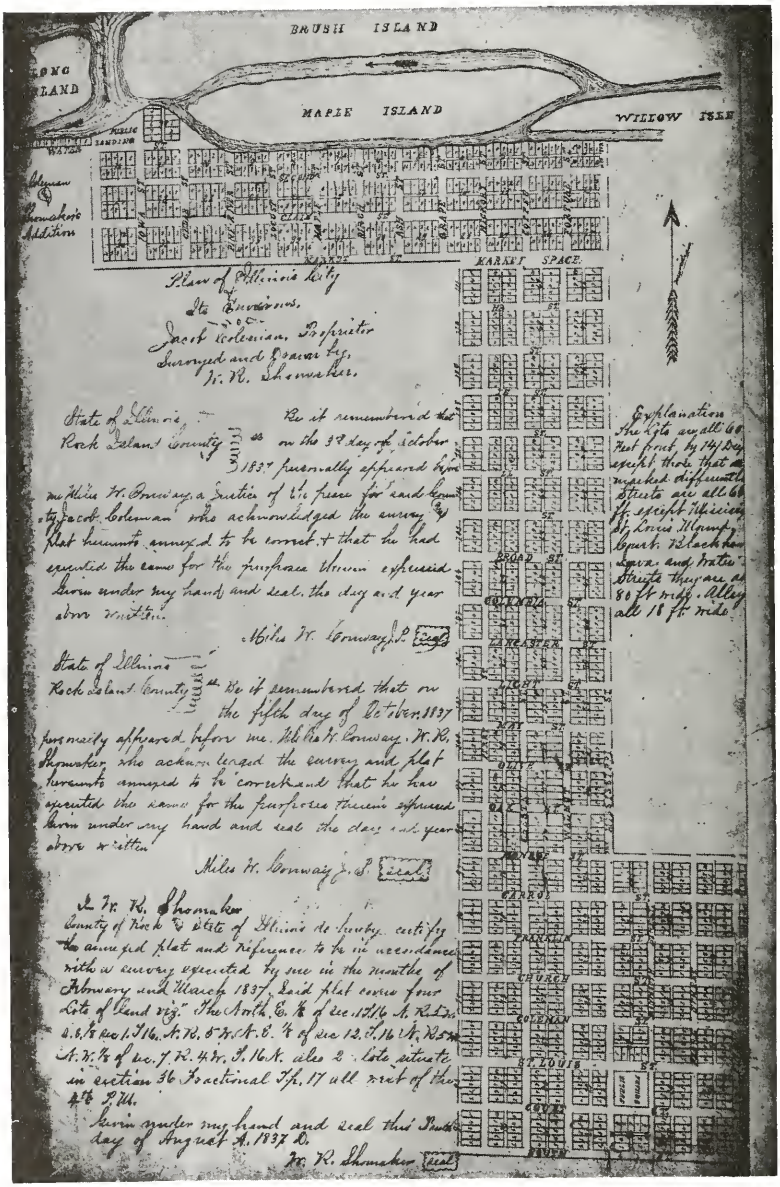
In times of high water on the River, the horse ferry which normally carried people, animals and vehicles between Bloomington (the earlier name for Muscatine, Iowa) and the Illinois shore brought its cargoes to Drury's Landing where the ferry could tie up to load and unload regardless of the river stage. On such occasions, said McGreer, there might be as many as fifty or sixty ox- or horse-drawn vehicles in the place. The importance of the settlement was reinforced by the establishment of a post office on July 5, 1837. At first called "Drury's Landing," it became simply "Drury's" in 1848 and then "Drury" in December 1853. It was also known as "Walnut Valley" for a time.

Drury's Landing and Van Atta's Landing developed because of the growing river traffic. But there were others who came to Illinois who had town building in mind. "The earliest towns in the Ohio Territory," says Richard Lingeman, "whether they were laid out or simply grew up without planning, were sited in places the settlers thought desirable—along rivers and streams; on trails; traces, and later roads; around crossroads taverns; near military posts; at fords and passes, or near gristmills that ground the first settlers' corn."[15]

Between Drury's Landing and the Pine Bluffs there developed a town of this type. Its formal name was Richmond, but the settlers called it "Jimtown." The earliest townspeople provided basic services to the area. Two doctors, Charles Drury and Eli Reynolds had an office and apothecary shop there. Asbury Warfield had a general store, Tom Comstock a copper shop, a man named DuPont a blacksmith shop. There were also six or eight houses.[16]

Lingeman continues: "During the next stage, towns were more consciously planned. They were located on what was hoped to be a place with a future and peopled by whatever drop-offs from the westward flow of immigrants could be lured there. The best natural sites had already been exploited, and the hopes for these newer towns, platted by the proprietors of the [soil] were banked on the future. . ."[17]

Such a community was Illinois City. In 1836, neither the popularity or proximity of the Drurys, Drury's Landing and Richmond deterred a newcomer from planning a settlement on the prairie only a half dozen miles to the southeast. He was William C. Bussey, who bought 320 acres of land in section 12 of present-day Drury Township and section 7 of present-day Buffalo Prairie Township. The tract reached from west of present day Illinois City to east of the town. In the easternmost 150 acres of this strip, Bussey platted a town to be called Bristol. The site was some nine miles east of Bloomington (Muscatine), some six miles west of the settlement which became Edgington, and a dozen miles southwest of the settlement which became Andalusia. The burgeoning community of Stephenson (later Rock Island) was far to the northeast.



Plat of Illinois City.

But nothing came of Bussey's plan for two reasons. In the spring of 1837, a newcomer from Chautauqua County of New York State, one Jacob Coleman, hired W. R. Shoemaker, a surveyor, to survey land two miles west of Bussey's proposed town, and in the fall of 1837, Thomas S. Klumph, as associate of Coleman's and a relative by marriage, made Bussey an offer for his land which was too good to refuse.

Klumph, a descendant of a German family which had come to the United States early in the eighteenth century and whose grandfather had fought with the Revolutionary Army, had also come from Chautauqua County with his family and the family of John H. Eby, also related to Klumph and Coleman by marriage. In that extreme western New York county, Klumph had been a successful entrepreneur in several enterprises. The names of Coleman, Eby and Klumph and their spouses were to be spread upon page after page of Rock Island County's earliest land deed records.

One of the more interesting entries in Deed Book A of Rock Island County real estate transactions is Coleman's plat of a new town, Illinois City. From a proposed "Illinois City Landing" at the town's northwest corner, the town would have fronted the river upstream for about a mile. From that riverfront area, the town was platted southward for about a mile and a half up the steep forested river bluffs and across some flat prairie. The southernmost part of the town, a seven block by seven block square, divided by a north-south "boulevard," Mississippi Street, is the area of present day Illinois City.

Typically for those times, many of the streets were named for trees or fruits. Others were named for such patriots as Franklin and Monroe. Close to Columbia there was to be a Fortune Street. Coleman Street was obviously named for Jacob Coleman. His name appears on the plat as "Proprietor." Actually, Coleman owned only the western part of the proposed town, that in today's Drury Township, west of Mississippi Street. Klumph owned the eastern half, now located in Buffalo Prairie Township.

Klumph's biographer says that Klumph bought the land at "rock-bottom" prices because of the 1837 financial panic.[18] But the record shows that Klumph and Coleman paid Bussey some six dollars an acre for land which Bussey had bought the year before for a dollar and a quarter an acre. The result was a nice profit for Bussey and freedom from the chore of selling town lots. Incidentally, shortly afterwards Bussey bought more land in the area for $1.25 an acre.

Based on the quantity of blocks and lots in Coleman's and Klumph's proposed town, it seems that Illinois City was planned to house a population of five or six thousand. It was an ambitious project, a forest dream as wild and as improbable as Shakespeare's Forest of Arden. Some might compage the concept to "paper" or "lithographic" towns promoted by numerous speculators of the time, and satirized in the following passage:

"Lithographic towns

In western wilds, where yet unbroken ranks
Of thrifty beavers build unchartered 'banks,'
And prowling panthers occupy the lots,
Adorned with churches on the paper plots!"[19]

The accepted definition for such schemes, "a city in embryo so described on paper, by unprincipled adventurers, that emigrants and settlers [would] repair thither in large numbers, only to find sometimes that the thriving city of their dreams contains nothing but 'castles in Spain,' and not even a log shanty to boast of,"[20] applied to other speculations in Illinois, but would not apply to Illinois City. Klumph, Coleman and Eby built homes there, and together the three organized a real estate firm to sell lots, and to buy and sell area farm lands. Klumph and Eby also organized a mercantile company bearing their names, and built a store building on the northwest corner of Mississippi Street and present-day Illinois Highway 92. (Fig. 2) As Klumph's influence increased, he became justice of the peace and, on October 12, 1838, postmaster, a year after the Drury's Landing post office was established.

Klumph, Eby and Coleman did sell town lots and farm lots. Among transactions on the record (many town lots were sold on unfulfilled contracts which are not on the record) some are of more interest than others. On August 13, 1838, one John Andrews traded Jacob Coleman one span of horses, their harness and a wagon, two yoke of oxen, six log cabins and wagon, one clock, one side board, one table, five feather beds and bedding, one cooking stove, and lumber, fence rails and crops for two lots facing the north side of a proposed Public Square next to Mississippi Street. One wonders how the Andrews family survived without its household goods.

On April 13, 1838, Coleman and his wife, Thomas Klumph "and others unspecified" sold one Rapin Ellsworth Smith a total of 129 lots, including a lot next to the two traded to Andrews, two lots on the wooded bluffs, and other lots along the river front. On July 8, 1839, Smith bought an additional twenty lots. Smith was obviously becoming a real estate agent on his own.

But most of the town lots went unsold. By 1844, Illinois City cast only 73 votes in the presidential election which suggests a population of 350 to 400. Drury, the name given to the Landing and Richmond combined in 1842, when a post office was built there, cast 80 votes. Klumph was also having problems disposing of the farm land he had bought for six dollars an acre. Illinois records through the early 1840s show government land in the area still selling for $1.25 an acre.

Still, says Klumph's biographer, "everything progressed beautifully for four years and Thomas became a wealthy man—on paper! Then it happened. First, the real estate company was sued over the legality of its contracts—and lost. Thomas' personal speculations got him deeper in debt. Finally, as hope dimmed that Illinois City would ever amount to

much, people began to move on. The general store began to fail and the income from the postoffice and the justiceship decreased."[21] On August 8, 1841 and again on January 31, 1842, the sheriff foreclosed on much of Klumph's land, and on land owned by Coleman as well. Klumph hung on until 1846. Then at age 50, he gave up whatever dreams he may have had for Illinois City and moved his family, which included three children born in Illinois City, to an area northeast of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, which he named New Buffalo.

Coleman's fortunes seem to have improved. In March of 1846 he bought more land in the Illinois City area. He was still there when the census taker came around in 1850, but was gone in 1860. Only John and Lucinda Eby remained in the Illinois City area into the 1860s; he is quite likely the man elected as Buffalo Prairie Township supervisor in 1865, although the records print the name as *Ely*.

Of the pioneer names, two, Van Atta and Fuhr, have lasted in the area for the century and a half the town has endured. Benjamin Van Atta, who is quite likely the same Benjamin who served in the Rock River Rangers, is buried in a remote corner of the Illinois City cemetery, while the most recent Van Atta burial there was 1972. Direct descendants of Valentine Fuhr still farm just east of Illinois City, and one teaches in the Illinois City grade school.

The original town plat did not include a cemetery, but about 1840, two blocks in the present northeast corner of Illinois City were deeded for that purpose. Unlike many Midwest town cemeteries today, which have larger populations than the towns themselves, the Illinois City cemetery is a small one, indicating that through the years the town has had a transient population.

An 1885 history of Rock Island County summarized the early history of the town. "There is one village lying partly in this [Buffalo Prairie Township] and partly in Drury Township,—Illinois City,—which was laid out at a very early day and in a grand style, its owner fondly dreaming that at no distant day it would be the metropolis of the West. For some years a good trade was had by the merchants, but the completion of the railroad, and the trade being diverted from the river, ruined the prospects of Illinois City. At present [1885] there are two general stores, one pottery and one blacksmith shop to represent the business of the place . . . The United Brethren and Methodist Episcopal churches have each houses of worship in this place. There is also a fine two-story frame school house. . ."[22]

The pottery did not survive although the clay pits from which its raw materials came operated a while longer, shipping their clays to Peoria. In more recent years, the frame school house was converted to a residence, and a one-story modern brick structure (Fig. 3) was erected. There is also a frame community hall (Fig. 4). There are no street names; they have been replaced by a county-wide street-numbering system. On August 29, 1849, probably in response to the sinking fortunes of the town, the postoffice was joined with that at Buffalo Prairie, but on May 1, 1851, the Illinois City

Massey's Hillbilly Corner. NE corner of Mississippi Blvd. and Hwy. 92.

Ewing's Wood Shop — Mississippi Blvd. and Hwy. 92.

postoffice was reopened. Today it has a small, but modern building on the south side of Illinois Highway 92.

The Drury post office was discontinued in 1892. In 1899, John McGreer noted that "not a landmark remains to indicate to passersby that a lively village once flourished there. Where the business center was, is overgrown with trees, underbrush and weeds. In Jimtown . . . a couple of tumble down log cabins remain."[23] Although as recently as 1950, a United States geological survey map showed a "Jimtown School" in the area, today there is no evidence that Drury or Jimtown ever existed. What used to be the site of Drury's Landing is now a farmer's cornfield. The Mississippi, contained by an earthen dike, is a quarter of a mile distant.

Until the last decade, Mississippi Street did not extend beyond the north village limits of Illinois City. Instead a diagonal trail, not on the 1837 plat, led from the end of the street down a ridge to the river where it became a "river road" leading to Andalusia. Another diagonal trail, also not on the 1837 plat, led from the northwest corner of Illinois City down a wooded ravine to the site of the proposed Illinois City Landing. Both trails still remain but since 1970, Mississippi Street has been graded and hard-surfaced down the bluff to the river and on to Andulusia.

There are several reasons why Illinois City today does not resemble the dreams of its founders. As the railroads spanned the continent from East to West the importance of steamboat traffic diminished. Landings were no longer needed, and bridges crossing the river meant the end of the ferries. Illinois City businessmen of today add that routing two railroads not through or near the town as had been hoped for but rather several miles east of Illinois City, and along the Iowa side of the river from Rock Island to Muscatine, also hurt the town's chances.

Illinois City is a good example of a town conceived with high hopes and much personal investment of its founders, which did not materialize due to a combination of geographic and economic factors. But, Illinois City still exists, unlike Wrayville, Foster or Ferdinand which have completely disappeared. Its location at the juncture of Illinois Highway 92 and the Andalusia Road (formerly Mississippi Street) assures its continued existence as a cross-road business center and a local landmark, mute testimony to the spirit of unbound optimism of the Illinois frontier.

NOTES

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[1]Illinois City, in Drury and Buffalo Prairie townships in western Rock Island County, is not to be confused with "Illinoistown" or "Illinois City" in St. Clair County, both predecessors of East St. Louis, Illinois. Communities by the same name also existed in Grundy and Whiteside counties.

[2]William J. Petersen, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (Iowa City: The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1968 [first published 1937]), pp. 90-106.

[3]Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Cornbelt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 8, 9.

[4]William Cullen Bryant, *Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. Parke Godwin (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964 [first published 1884]), v. 2, pp. 14, 15.

[5]Herbert Quick, *Vandemark's Folly* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1922), p. 105.

[6]Bogue, pp. 2, 3.

[7]*Rock Island Republican*, May 10, 1854. *War of 1812 Bounty Lands of Illinois* does not list this warrant.

[8]*Rock Island Republican*, November 15, 1854.

[9]J. A. Seiver, "Reminiscences", *Atlas of Rock Island County, Illinois* (n.p.: The Bookmark, 1976 [first published 1905]), p. 149. *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Rock Island County*, ed. Newton Bateman (Chicago: Munsell, 1914), II, pp. 964, 965.

[10]M. J. McEniry, "Old Settlers Association," *Historical Encyclopedia*, p. 792.

[11]Bogue, p. 124.

[12]*The Past and Present of Rock Island County, Ill.* (Chicago: H. F. Kett, 1877), p. 177.

[13]Drury's Landing was at the northwest tip of Section 5, present-day Drury Township. See map, *The Past and Present of Rock Island County, Ill.*, p. [10, 11].

[14]John McGreer, "Drury's Landing," *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*, ed. Irving B. Richman (Chicago: S. J. Clark, 1911), pp. 232-234. John G. Powell "Drury Township," *Historical Encyclopedia*, II, p. 964.

[15]Richard Lingeman *Small Town America* (New York: Putnam's, 1980), p. 107.

[16]John McGreer. McGreer reproduced a pencil sketch of Drury's Landing and Richmond, done from memory.

[17]Lingeman, p. 107.

[18]Richard A. Klumph, *John Thomas Klumph* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: n.p.. 1967), pp. 13-16.

[19]Dorothy A. Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1926), p. 446.

[20]Sylvia Chapin, *A New Dictionary of Americanism* (Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research, 1968 [first published 1902]), p. 300.

[21]Klumph, p. 24.

[22]*Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock Island County, Illinois* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing, 1885), p. 787.

[23]McGreer, p. 244.

TRAVEL ON THE WESTERN ILLINOIS FRONTIER: THE MEMOIR OF WILLIAM DICKSON

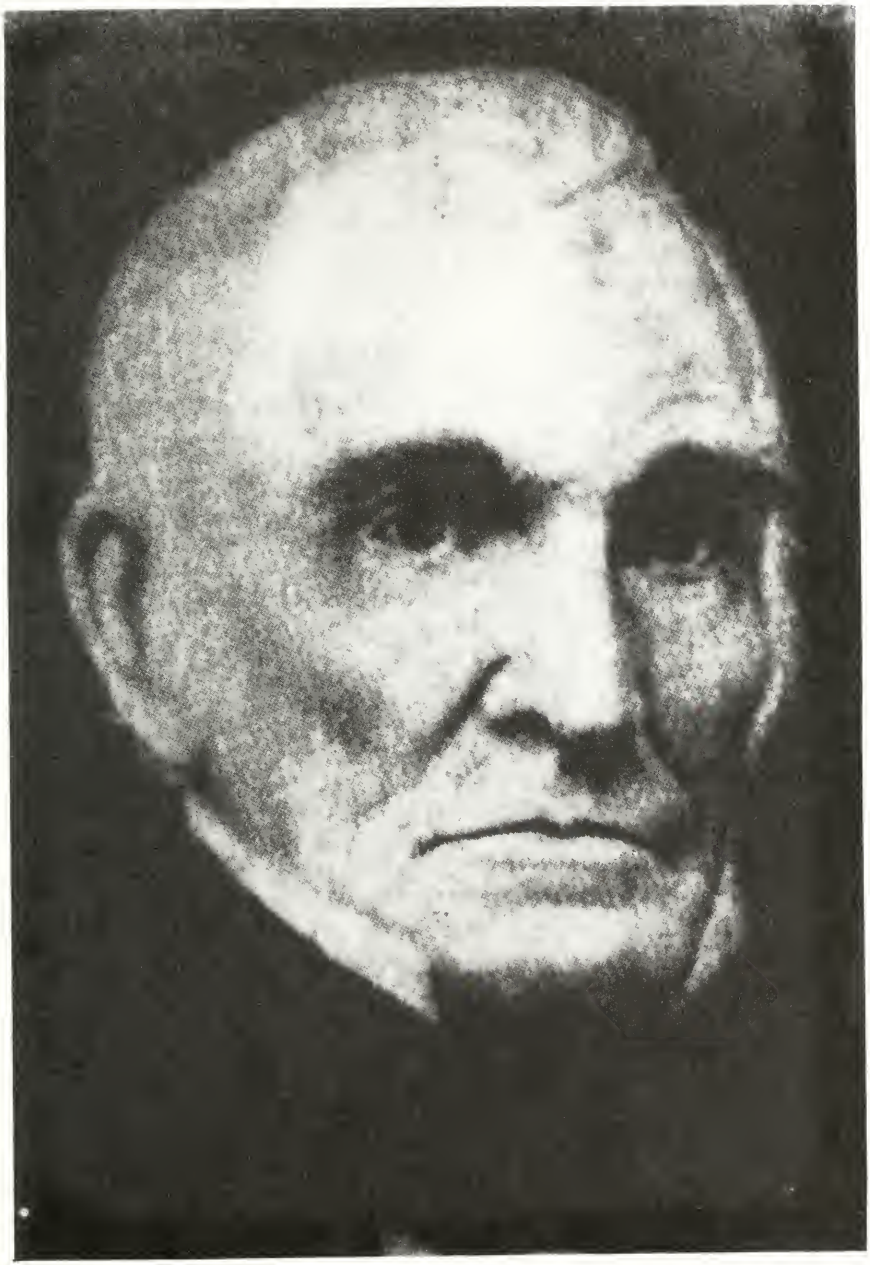
William Roba

After the defeat of Blackhawk's band of Sauk warriors in 1832, western Illinois beckoned to a new generation of frontier settlers. For settlers coming from the eastern states, the uninhabited prairie of Illinois appeared as an obstacle, a wilderness only occasionally broken up by rivers and wooded groves. A graphic account of the dangers faced by the early settlers traversing these prairies appears in an unpublished memoir by William Dickson.

The memoir, which Dickson entitled "A Few Short Sketches of My Eventful Life," contains first-hand impressions of his trips to western Illinois in 1834 and 1836. He wrote the "Sketches" in August 1853, and sent it to his son, Cyrus Dickson, in May 1854. The Rock Island Historical Society received a typescript copy of the "Sketches" in 1952 as a gift of Dickson H. Leavens, a great-grandson of William Dickson. Lucille Sampson, archivist for the Historical Society, generously cooperated in allowing portions to be quoted, *in extenso*. The grammar, spelling and punctuation have been retained from the typescript version with notes added to provide clarification of persons, events and terms.

Dickson was 70 years old when he wrote this memoir of his early travels on the Illinois prairie. In 1837 he moved to the banks of the Rock River and in 1843 platted the town of Camden, now Milan. Dickson had many occupations throughout his life. He was a farmer, an army officer, a storekeeper, a surveyor, land speculator, and church organizer. He lived to be 86 and was remembered as "one of the hardy pioneers who penetrated this region when not a dozen white men were to be found in a circuit of fifty miles hereabouts."[1] He was a life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, and often interpreted events as the results of divine intervention.

Dickson was in his early fifties when he left Pennsylvania in a light wagon with his son William B. Dickson in order to investigate possibilities in Illinois. It was the end of April 1834, and Dickson recalled that he "had long had a desire to explore the far west, as it was then called, and I



William Dickson

thought my circumstances would justify a trip west, as I was an experienced woodsman as well as waterman, and I knew what it was to camp out."[2] When they reached Ottawa, his son decided to return to Pennsylvania so Dickson proceeded alone on horseback, crossed the La Salle Prairie, and eventually reached Peoria. He then struck out on a course towards the lower rapids of the Mississippi River, ninety miles west.[3]

"Before reaching them I changed my course more northerly and struck the Father of Rivers at the lower Yellow Banks, now Oquawka. I found one man and his family there, he was an Indian trader and very intelligent, and was kind and generous. He told me that a large party of Sac Indians had left there that day, and that in a few days he was going to follow. He said I was then fifty miles from Rock River, which I could reach next day if I got an early start; he said I would have some bad waters to cross, but to keep near the Indian path. About fifteen miles above there I came to a bayou making out of the Mississippi River;[4] its appearance was frightful, and no man to leap upon. I remembered that the Lord had said that he would be with those who put their confidence in Him, and that the waters should not overflow them. I tried to look away to Him, and went in. For some distance the water was about belly deep, then it began to assume the appearance of a lake, my horse began to swim, sometimes touching bottom, and the mud below was my greatest fear; but we got safely through. I looked back with wonder, and felt that was God.

Here I must be permitted to digress from my subject to speak of my feelings at that time, and the mercies of the Lord in bringing me safely through those dangers. When I reached dry land, I dismounted and kneeled down on the prairie and thanked Him for the deliverance He had mercifully vouchsafed to me. I was never more sensible of His presence. Then and there I promised that if it was His will that I should locate in the West, I would build a house of worship for God,—which promise I have kept, He enabling me to complete the work.[5] I would this day thank Him for sparing my life to worship in it for several years and may His loving kindness and tender mercies, together with the influences of His Holy Spirit be sent down on all who enter in.

To return to my subject: I reached Rock Rver, crossed over to the ground where the Black Hawk Indians had their town and put up for the night with a man by the name of Wells, who had lived with the Indians for some years before they were driven off.[6] A more beautiful place I had never seen. More than four hundred acres were covered with blue-grass and with beautiful shrubbery, partly surrounded by Rock River, the water as clear as crystal, the banks and bottom limestone. When I came to the south branch I found it to be a quarter of a mile wide, with a strong current about eighteen inches deep, with a smooth rock-bottom. Then I crossed an island a quarter of a mile which brought me to the main channel, five hundred feet wide. The next morning, after spending most of the forenoon visiting Indian graves, etc., I went up opposite Rock Island, left my horse in the care of an Indian and went over to Fort Armstrong. There I became acquainted with Colonel Davenport, who commanded the troops said to be about five hundred in number; likewise with the Indian Agent and Indian Trader, whose names were all Davenport.[7]

The Colonel told me I had never been in such a place; he said that there were ten miles square, making the Indian town the centre, on which Nature had been more lavish of its favor than any other spot of the same size in the United States. He said that he had been on the island sixteen years and had been all over the surrounding country, and that it was the best in the United States and the most enviable place for health that could be found anywhere. He advised me, as I had come so far, to stay and view the water-power on both rivers, and the natural advantages which would eventually be brought into use. I did so, and was fully satisfied that the views of that noble officer were correct. There were from five hundred to eight hundred Indians on the Island and about it; I had a good opportunity through those men of getting an introduction to ten or twelve of their Chiefs. I never saw a more sprightly set of men. I smoked the pipe of peace with them. Some were Sacs and some were Foxes, they gave me to understand that they would protect me while in their country.

Those men on the Island gave me a description of the road from there to Galena; they said there was a house twelve or fifteen miles up the river, then fifty miles from there was a family lived, about the mouth of the Plum river.[8] I started about noon and went to the first house that night. Next morning I started early. I had been told about the Meridocia, a bayou that puts out of the Mississippi thirty miles above Rock Island, and that there was no way to get around it. When I came to it I found it much wider than I had expected and the country was overflowed by the river and to add to its terrors, the wind was blowing strong into it, making the waves the size of half-barrels. I knew well that it would not do for me to stand and look at it lest my courage should fail me; I took off my coat and tied it on my shoulders, mounted and went in. Before my horse got quite to swimming depth, it stepped over a perpendicular rock; such a plunge as that was, I have seldom seen; his head did not go under; I was in bust deep. After righting, he carried me through the waves like a steamboat. About ten or twelve miles further I had to swim a stream called the Cat-tails; to my great joy off to the right I saw a man travelling on a path leading from Como on Rock River; we went on together; he was from Kentucky, out exploring, as I was. About sun-down we got to Plum river and the sight was horrifying. Its banks were overflowed by backwater from the Mississippi. We passed down it to find a place to get down the bank; I was foremost and came to a place where the bank seemed to slope a little; it was slippery, my horse slid it, and, swimming like a duck before he was twelve feet from shore, he worked well until he got to the middle of the river and then began to settle. I talked kindly to him and he made a desperate effort and rose on the water; as I approached the opposite bank I found it steep. He struck bottom about ten or twelve feet from shore; it was soft and I dismounted, the water was just to my chin, I never moved until he got on the bank. Now the reader would naturally inquire "What became of the Kentuckian?" Well, I will tell him: he was about ten rods behind me on getting into the water, and when I was a little past the middle of the river I heard his horse snort and had to forget my own cares for a moment. Looking back there was nothing to be seen of the horse but his nose and the man was nearly breast deep, and he was two rods below [sic] me. As soon as I gained the land, I ran down the shore and as he approached it, bent down a long alder

that grew on the bank; he took hold and pulled up so near that he threw me his rein. The bank was perpendicular and the water deep. We towed his horse to the place mine went out. He was so far gone that we had great difficulty in getting him out. We succeeded in finding a house before dark, where we and our horses fared well. We had travelled fifty miles that day and had nothing to eat ourselves and our horses nothing but grass. I have always felt disposed to acknowledge a kind Providence in preserving my life through the perils of that day, one that never will be forgotten by me while memory lasts. It was June 1834.

. . . I had formed a determination to see the Prophet's Town on Rock River, forty miles above the mouth. In the mining country I took an Indian trail that the people told me led to the Prophet's Town, but could give me no idea of the distance; some said that I might go through in a day. I started about daylight in the morning and that day I had the heads of Apple and Plum rivers to cross. They were very high and the path was dim, in places it was difficult to find. When night came on I put up under a single oak, which stood alone on a large prairie. After tying my horse, head and foot, I gathered a few dead bushes among the grass to make a fire, but found my matches were all wet. I was afraid of nothing but snakes, and lay down near the root of the tree. The night was clear, but damp and cold; sometime before day I awoke and as very much chilled with the cold; I found that the high grass in which I lay was loaded with dew, and if I shifted my position I must get wet. Standing in my bed and teetering on my toes, but my blood in circulation; I then laid down and slept until morning. Good reader, do not think it strange when I say that it was to me one of the most pleasant nights of my life, and I will tell you why. I was completely secluded from the bustle of the world, and was about eight hundred miles from home and alone in that wild waste, yet I was not alone, for God was there and granted me His gracious presence and more nearness and close communion with Him, and made me feel my entire dependence on Him for protection and every other blessing, both spiritual and temporal. I could see Him all around and over me. The earth was silent, the firmament was showing off His handiwork. I had eaten nothing since leaving the mines early this morning before, but my eyes and mind were so feasted I suffered nothing from hunger. About ten or eleven o'clock I reached the Rock river opposite the Prophet's Town; a man whose name was McClure and his wife, had settled that Spring on the old town site, which was one of the gardens of this world. Their nearest neighbor was thirty-five miles. With much difficulty I crossed the river with his help and got to their cabin, and I set them down in my journal to be as likely a couple as I had seen for sprightly appearance and intelligence. She soon prepared one of the best meals I ever sat down to, and I was prepared to do it good justice. When I saw such an enterprising female, who had left her friends in Tioga County Pennsylvania and traveled west to take possession of that wild, but beautiful spot, on the banks of one of the finest rivers in the world, it made me think but little of what I had done. But it was not land alone, it was to gratify the wishes of a bold and intrepid husband, and she was willing to cast her lot with him for happiness and fortune in the far west. I left them with seeming reluctance and bent my course up the river and through an almost trackless waste to Chicago, then home."

Dickson continued his explorations to the north and by the end of May had traveled about 1,700 miles on horseback. He remembered with pride that he had a compass and "took the bearings three times a day and kept notes. Being alone most of the time I had a good opportunity of reading out of the Book of Nature, which was beautiful beyond description. On those large prairies I became acquainted with several Indian Chiefs, who were the most intelligent men I ever met in giving descriptions of the western country."[9]

Two years later, in 1836, William Dickson returned to the region, and in thirteen months travelled 10,000 miles, 3,000 on horseback with his son and cousin. Ottawa was again the starting point. From here the party moved west, generally following the Sauk Indian Trail.[10]

"On leaving Ottawa we went up Fox River to John Green's mill; he put us on an Indian trail which he said would take us to Princetown. We travelled very hard, crossing the heads of several streams running into the Illinois river. One was called the Tomahawk, in crossing it my son's horse mired, threw him off and nearly buried him in the mud and every bad slough we came to after that we thought of the Tomahawk. About sundown we reached a high ridge, on which the town of Dover is located, from which we thought we could see Princetown;[11] we pressed on, but it became dark, we lost the path and wandered on the prairie until it was late at night, when we saw light and made our way to it. I woman had been up attending to a sick child and had a light, which was fortunate for us, for we were then three miles north of Princetown.[12] The next day we travelled about forty-five miles, saw but one man, his name was Thomas and he lived near the Big Bureau river. He had been in the Black Hawk war and told us about Stillman's defeat. That night we got to a cabin at the east end of the Red Oak Grove. The woman said that she had once lived at North East and that her father's name was Evelith, I knew him well. The next day we reached Rock River and forded the slough,—it was high, onto Vanroof's Island."

In the fall of that same year Dickson again crossed the country by land to Rock Island. "After I got my business done at Rock Island and made some arrangements for commencing business in the Spring, James started across the country for home. I set out for Vandalia to get a charter for a bridge across Rock river.[13] When I started the snow was four inches deep and I crossed Rock river on the ice. The first night I lodged in Richland Grove;[14] it began to rain in the night, in the morning the snow was gone and the earth was deluged with water. I hired a man with a horse and buggy to take me to Knoxville;[15] we crossed the Edwards river near his house, it was rising very fast; one or two miles ahead we came to a branch which ran into it which we could not cross. Knowing that our situation was alarming, as there were no inhabitants near, no place of retreat but by the way we came, we hastened back to the river. It had risen over its banks the ice was running, the wind blowing almost a hurricane, and hailing. It would not do to hesitate, we stripped the horse and I mounted him. He was a small Indian pony. I kicked well and he plunged into the river and carried

me through. A part of the time there was nothing but his head to be seen and hardly that. After landing in water about knee deep, I looked back to see my man; I told him he must not stand there trembling, if he did he would live half an hour; that he must either swim or I would try to drive the pony back. He chose the latter. With some difficulty I drove the pony into the river, he swam down the stream on to the head of an island. I ran down the shore and threw pieces of ice at him until he made for the other side. My man mounted and came through. He was anything but comfortable. I took the horse and ran him at full speed back to where we started, with my clothes frozen stiff; I left my man to save his life by running. This was in the morning: About noon it cleared off, the wind blowing a hurricane and cold. I then concluded to change my course and go to Andover.[16] I had to pass through a prairie of eight miles without a house, in which were two sloughs or dug-outs, as they are called in Illinois.[17] I hired a boy with a horse to go with me and carry me over them; the first one we crossed without difficulty; the second was overflowed, the bottom was covered about belly deep for ten or fifteen rods.[18] When we got over the stream, which was covered with ice, the horse broke in; in the struggle, the boy being on behind, sprang on to my shoulders and from there to the bank and to save myself from the horse, I pitched off and landed head foremost, through the broken ice in the bottom of the dug-out, my arms running into the mud nearly to the elbows. The horse righted and went out; we waded out to bare ground. I put my boy on the horse and fixed his old rags about him as well as I could, to keep him from freezing, and paid him well for his risk and trouble. *I thought the money seemed to warm him:* I could not help but forget my own case to feel for that boy; he had four miles to go against a strong wind that was cold enough to penetrate the hide of a buffalo. The horse refused to take the water and I had to wade nearly waist deep to get him over where the ice was, and then told the boy to ride at full speed and never think of freezing. How few such boys! Then I had four miles through a naked prairie to the first house and at least one-fourth of the way was through water and ice. It was dark when I got there, and the people told me that at a house two miles ahead there was a man who was to start with a wagon next morning for Princeton, and fearing I might be too late in the morning, I went on that night with my clothes frozen stiff. I found the people kind, they gave me a warm supper and a buffalo skin to lie on by their fire. Here ends the trials of that day, one which I will always remember.

Next morning I found my clothes dry and all well. I took passage with the man who was going to Princetown. I travelled all day on the dividing ridge between the waters of the Greene and Edwards rivers, without any road, being guided on our course by the groves without going into them. The country for forty or fifty miles was uninhabited. About sundown we passed the south end of the Barren Grove; we were then on the Sac trail to Ottawa, which runs three miles north of Princetown. When it became dark we were ten or twelve miles west of Cole Creek; we knew there was a

house half a mile east of the Creek to which we were bound, but it was dark and the darkness was vastly increased in consequence of the prairie having been burned over. We lost the path and wandered around sometime without anything to guide us but the wind. Our prospect for perishing, became apparent every moment. We stopped; he went to hunt for the path. I remained with the horses. In about half an hour I heard him halloo, and drove through the darkness to him; he was on the path and kept it by walking before the team until we came to where the grass was only burned on one side. We soon came to Cole Creek Timber and descended a steep bank into the valley near the Creek, which was very high, we could hear it roaring. We were then on dry ground, thick timber was around us; the change was so great it seemed as if we had changed Greenland for South Carolina. I was perfectly contented to stay there until morning, but my man was alarmed, and said we could not live until daylight, and commenced hallooing to bring some person from the house half a mile east of the creek. After hallooing at least an hour a man answered and came with a lantern. He said the water was deep and that there had been a team drowned there that day; that if we would try it he would stand with the lantern at the place for coming out. He said the horses would not have to swim more than one rod, but the current was strong. If my man had been going to his grave, his feeling could not have been more agitated; he had just before thought he must be frozen to death, and now he must be drowned. I took the lines, gave the horses the whip, plunged in all over, went through safe. The man with the light piloted us to his house. This closed the scenes of the third day from Rock Island.

The next day we reached Princetown, had no trouble. That evening the Galena stage for Peoria came; it was full and I had to agree to carry a small man on my knees. It was a six passenger coach, with seven men inside. I bore my load the first ten miles, then I tried to hire him to stop for the next stage, that he would not do. A rough looking fellow swore it would not do to ride one man to death in that way, that he would try it for two miles; by that time he found that it was oppressive and said that some way must be invented to carry the fellow, and that he should ride no longer on any man's lap. The rider said I had his seat, and if any man were incommoded it should be me; the rest said, "No, that I was the oldest man and should have my seat, that we were both way-passengers, and if he did not stop growling he should be put out the first place we stopped." I proposed to lay him across our knees, and that plan was agreed to, as the seats came so close that our knees met in the middle,—so we rolled him from front to rear and back again until we got to Peoria, which was the next night about nine o'clock. Here ended the fourth day from Rock Island.

At Peoria I had just got to bed and asleep, when I was waked up and told that the Springfield stage had come to the other side of the river and that the storm was so great the ferry-boat could not cross, and that all who wished to go must go over in the small boats. The passengers had increased to nine; we all went down to the river with our baggage, a terrible

storm of wind and snow was going on and the river was rough. The boat could not carry all at one load, they took the baggage and Colonel Boubion, of Chicago and myself; it was so dark we could not see ten feet ahead, the boat rolled, and several times took in water. They landed us and put out the baggage and left; we started to go to the stage, but soon found we were on an island, and there we were obliged to stay, exposed to a violent storm of wind and snow for at least an hour and a half, until the boat returned with the rest of the passengers. Nothing extraordinary occurred until we reached Springfield, and from there about thirty miles south to a place called McGuion's Point. By that time the snow had fallen so deep we had to leave the stage and take a four horse wagon, paying twelve-and-a-half cents per mile, in this way we succeeded in getting to Vandalia. I was there about eight days; failed in meeting L. C. Turner, but succeeded in getting my bridge charter passed by the Legislature."

Dickson's travel accounts are a valuable source of information about a frontier region which existed for only a short period of time. As empty prairies filled up with settlers, and roads increasingly followed the section and township boundaries, in the words of Hildegard Johnson, an order appeared upon the land.[19] But, in the 1830's, it was the vast rolling prairie, the faint Indian paths, the treacherous rivers, and the isolated cabins of the first white settlers which defined the wilderness region of western Illinois.

NOTES

[1]Rock Island *Argus*, 26 November, 1869.

[2]By this time Dickson had been a frontiersman in Pennsylvania, a log-cabin, and brick-house builder, a boat builder, and a canal operator. In 1829 he had became Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Canal and had undoubtedly learned a great deal about practical hydraulics. For more information about Dickson see: Duaine D. Carlson, "Willian Dickson, the Founder of Milan," *Travels in Time, Milan, Illinois* (Mediapolis, Iowa: New Era Print, 1982), pp. 7-9.

[3]"Lower Rapids" was the name for the Des Moines Rapids on the Mississippi River, while the Rock Island Rapids were called "Upper Rapids." The following text by Dickson is taken from the "Sketches" pp. 81-89.

[4]In 1826 Timothy Flint used the word "bayou" in this same sense to describe a lateral canal. *Dictionary of American Regional English* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), I, p. 174.

[5]Dickson underwrote the building and furnishing of the First Presbyterian Church in Camden in 1846.

[6]This was Rinnah Wells who settled as a squatter near the Sauk Indian Settlement as early as 1826.

[7]Andrian and Marmaduke Davenport were names to these positions after the end of the Black Hawk War in 1832. They were not related to each other and had no kinship with Col. Davenport. See William Roba, *The River and the Prairie* (Quad Cities: The Hesperian Press, 1986), Ch. 2.

[8]For additional information see Newell Dailey, "The Galena Trail," Rock Island County Historical Society *Newsletter*, 12, no. 1 (April 1986), p. 12.

[9]William Dickson, "Sketches," p. 50.

[10]The best account of this trail is found in John H. Hauberg, "Indian Trails Centering At Black Hawk's Village," *Transactions of the Illinois Historical Society*, No. 28, 1921), pp. 87-109. The following selection is taken from the "Sketches" pp. 93, 98-104.

[11]Dover was a small settlement located five miles northeast of Princeton. Dickson traveled through the poorly drained wet prairies of Illinois. He called these marshy areas "sloughs". From his religious background, it is quite possible that he was reminded of the Slough of Despond in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

[12]The two-year old settlement of Princeton in 1836 contained more than 100 settlers. There were five log cabins housing small businesses: a blacksmith shop, Templeton's Store, Haskell's Store, the Princeton Hotel, and the Congregational Church. *History of Bureau County* (Chicago: World Publishing Co., 1885), p. 414.

[13]In late October, Dickson left the newly founded town of Stephenson (now Rock Island) opposite Ft. Armstrong for the state capital, 240 miles southeast.

[14]Richland Grove was famous as the largest concentration of trees in the midst of the vast prairie. The Old Testament image of the flood probably stayed with him as he struggled eastwards.

[15]Knoxville, about 25 miles away, had been settled in 1831 as the county seat for Knox County; it had the nearest post-office and stage-stop.

[16]Andover, less than half the way to the eastbound stage in Knoxville, was the first permanent settlement in what later became Henry County. The Reverends Pillsbury, Slaughter and Pike prepared a town on paper before the arrival of settlers who would take possession of 30,000 acres of land legally held by the New York Company. The ministers platted a section of land into streets, lots and squares; they also built the first mill. This was the first of three "colonies" of Easterners started in the region.

[17]The term "dug-out" was commonly used to describe a canoe fashioned out of a dead tree trunk or a shelter or primitive dwelling excavated in a hillside or dug in the ground and roofed with sod. Dickson's usage seems to be highly localized.

[18]Approximately 200 feet in length.

[19]Hildegard B. Johnson, *Order Upon the Land* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

DEATH AT MORMON NAUVOO, 1843-1845

M. Guy Bishop, Vincent Lacey, and Richard Wixon

Nauvoo, the Mormon community established on the banks of the Mississippi River in western Illinois, provides a suitable case study in mortality on the antebellum American frontier. Settled in 1839 by religious outcasts from Missouri, the burgeoning city had become one of the largest cities in the state by the time of its demise seven years later. The followers of Joseph Smith, founder and first prophet of Mormonism, had hoped to establish an earthy kingdom of God at the site, and for a brief period they appeared destined to succeed.[1] During their sojourn in Illinois, the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints as they preferred to call themselves, suffered from a death rate well above the national average for the mid-19th century. The statistics which documented the unhealthfulness of the community were dutifully published by the city sexton in the local newspapers, listing the age and cause of death of each person who died during the previous few weeks. And, going beyond the coldness of numbers alone, the struggle of the Mormons' sojourn at Nauvoo is also recorded in the host of extant diaries preserved from the period.

This study is based upon the reported deaths filed by the city sexton, augmented by selected journal entries of the Mormon inhabitants of Nauvoo. The statistical data contained herein is subject to certain limitations which hinder all studies of mortality. Death rates often fluctuate sizeably from year to year, and furthermore, the data can be compromised by a failure to report all deaths with the appointed official. An example of such unreported mortality may be infants whose passing went unnoted, or residents of sparsely settled areas who were simply buried without the filing of any formal notice of their passing.[2] The statistics used in this study are also affected by the rapid population growth of Nauvoo. The city expanded from approximately 5,000 residents in 1839 to over 11,000 six years later.[3] During these seven years the town went from a frontier settlement to a post-frontier community. This study is based solely upon the reported deaths filed with the city sexton. Still, it is possible to sketch an accurate picture of Nauvoo mortality rates since the data employed

represents the official record of death in the community, and the faithfulness with which the statistics were recorded adds much to their reliability.

Historians have tended to disagree as to the severity of the health conditions which prevailed at the Mormon settlement. One study has designated the locale as a "somewhat fever-infested Mississippi River peninsula," while another has described Nauvoo as having been frequently subjected to plagues of malaria. The chosen land, located at a bend of the river, was a continually wet area which was often impassable for men or animals. Perhaps the best assessment of the healthfulness of the area can be drawn from the contemporary accounts of its residents, which most often portrayed Nauvoo as a location prone to much sickness and death. Levi Jackman, an early Latter-day Saint inhabitant, recalled that it was "very sickley [sic] the first year."[4] And, by most reports, it never progressed much beyond Jackman's assessment.

Joseph Smith had chosen to relocate church headquarters to this bend of the Mississippi River regardless of its questionable reputation. In the official history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during this period, Smith noted that the vicinity "was so unhealthful, very few could live there"; but believing that divine intervention could reverse the natural conditions, construction of a city was attempted.[5] Unfortunately, the heavenly blessings never proved sufficient to stay the calamitous effects of disease which annually ravaged the community. Although consistent mortality statistics are not available for the years prior to 1843, the evidence from other sources has often alluded to recurring sickness and death at Nauvoo.

Malaria and cholera were endemic in the Mississippi River Valley throughout much of the 19th century, and murderous outbreaks of these diseases repeatedly ravaged inhabitants of the region. For example, during the summer of 1833, cholera had devastated the Illinois community of Jacksonville, while farther to the north, much of the state of Wisconsin was swept by an outbreak of malaria in 1846.[6] This latter malady, commonly referred to by the inhabitants as fever or ague, proved to be of almost constant concern to the Mormons at Nauvoo.

A problem with the identification of many of the diseases present at Nauvoo in the 1840s was the failure of the city sexton oftimes to employ the correct medical terminology in describing the cause of death. Commonly, the most obvious symptoms which preceded the victim's demise were simply listed as the cause. Consequently, many persons who may have died from any of several illnesses were said to have suffered only from varying types of fever or diarrhea.

Regardless of inadequat data or inconclusive labelling of diseases, the writings of the early Mormon inhabitants provide a firm indication of the regularity with which death visited Nauvoo. During the first year of the Latter-day Saints habitation Newel Knight noted: "I never saw so sickly a time." Erastus Snow, a church member who lived at nearby Montrose,

Iowa, observed that "the saints were sick on both sides of the river in almost every house. It truly seemed to me like a time of pestilence." Jessee Crosby, knowingly or not, correctly linked the prevalence of disease to seasonal conditions. He wrote: "[I] was taken sick in July and was laid up till late in September. As the winter approached the sickness disappeared." In November 1839, the editors of the Mormon newspaper, the *Times and Seasons,* apologized to their readers for delays in publication which had resulted from long illnesses in their families.[7]

The following summer the situation apparently worsened. Fearing for the continued growth of the community, Joseph Smith issued a proclamation in January 1841, in which he optimistically promoted Nauvoo. While recognizing that the location "had been objected to by some on account of the sickness that has prevailed in the summer months," Smith stated that, once acclimated, a person could live as healthfully in the city as in any other frontier settlement. To representatives of the church in England, who were expected to encourage Mormon emigration to western Illinois, he wrote: "I am led to the conclusion that this must eventually become a healthy place."[8]

Prophetic expectations aside, disease and death were rampant at Nauvoo in 1841. Newell Knight once more expressed his dismay over the situation when, writing that summer, he sadly commented, "I believe no place was more infested with sickness, at this time, than the city of Nauvoo. Some of our best men were swept down by the distroyer [sic]." So devastating was the fever epidemic of that year that Sidney Rigdon, a Mormon ecclesiastical leader, found it necessary to preach a "general funeral sermon" for the many dead. And yet, in September 1841 the *Times and Seasons* thankfully editorialized that "the health of this place has improved very much; there has not been . . . half as much sickness this season, . . . nor two thirds the amount of deaths."[9] When confronted by such a statement, one cannot help but wonder, even without the benefit of mortality statistics, what it must have been like previously.

It would appear that acclimation, known as "seasoning," which Joseph Smith alluded to in his proclamation did eventually improve the survival rate. Leonard J. Arrington, a prominent historian of Mormonism, has written of immigrants to the city: "Once they had survived malaria . . ., residents seemed to have immunity to it and were henceforth afflicted by more plebian diseases such as influenza, colds, and toothache."[10] This assessment by Professor Arrington assumed that a new arrival did, in fact, survive the initial months in Nauvoo. In a series of letters dated at the city early in 1843, Jonah Ball, a recently arrived settler, mentioned his poor health and a prolonged recovery. In May he speculated that "If I can weather it about a year so as to get seasoned to the climate I shall get entirely well, otherwise I may not." Perhaps this concept of improved health following seasoning helps to explain how the local newspapers could consistently claim improved health conditions. In fact, in 1842 the *Times and Seasons* went so far as to theorize that "we know of no city,

with an equal number of inhabitants, which exhibits so small a bill of mortality, weekly[,] as ours.[11]

While a lack of comparative information for other antebellum cities of similar size and location has rendered a test of the validity of this boast impossible, the published statistics for Nauvoo from 1843-1845 raise doubts as to its veracity. It must be remembered, however, that the effects of acclimation plus the rapid population growth of the community may well have made it appear to more established residents that the city's health was improving.

Available studies of mortality rates in other mid-19th century locations have tended to indicate that Nauvoo had, on the average, a significantly higher incidence of death. However, this is not necessarily a comparison of similar situations, but only a basic guide to national patterns. The crude mortality rate for the United States from 1830 to 1840 has been estimated at 13.8 deaths per one thousand persons. In 1850 this average dropped slightly to 13.5, the same as for Illinois in that year. While the estimated frequency of death ranged from 25-26.5 for larger American cities in the pre-Civil War period, one knowledgable student of the topic, Maris A. Vinovskis, has calculated that a mortality rate as low as 10 deaths per 1,000 persons might be considered reasonable for many smaller Massachusetts' towns. He has further theorized that this figure may well have been close to the national average for similarly-sized communities.[12]

Based on information compiled from the published sexton's reports for the city of Nauvoo from January 1843 through October 1845, it has been possible to determine the crude mortality rate for the community. The mortality rates were calculated based upon a local population of 11,000. In 1843 the crude mortality rate was 22 deaths per one thousand persons, in 1844 it had increased to 25.9, and in 1845, with data available only through the first ten months of the year, it had declined to 19.5. It should be noted that all of these crude mortality rates, even for the lowest year, 1845, were well above the national or state averages.

Numerically these ratios amounted to 242 recorded deaths for 1843, 285 deaths for 1844, and 215 deaths for the abbreviated period in 1845. They represented only those deceased persons who were buried within the city limits and thus were included in the sexton's report. A gap of some two months occurred in the reports between March and May of 1843, and again at the end of 1845. The average monthly death toll in 1844, the only year with complete totals, was 23.75 persons. For ten months in 1843 the figure was 24.2, and in 1845 it had declined to 21.5 per month. These mortality estimates would seem to indicate that, despite claims to the contrary, the unhealthfulness of Nauvoo did not begin to decline until 1845, the year prior to the Mormon exodus from Illinois.[13]

Causes of death ascribed by the city sexton for the years under consideration ranged from illnesses with less than one percent frequency, such as asthma, cholic, jaundice, or worms, to major afflictions which were each responsible for from ten to over twenty percent of the fatalities.

TAYLOR & WOODRUFF.
Nauvoo, May 3, 1843. no1

DEATHS, for the week ending Monday 14th Aug.—James Adams, 60 years 6 months 13 days; Cholera. Julian Bishop, 24 years; consumption. Samuel Hamar, 40 years; ague and fever. Erastus Dodge, 45 years 3 months; measles. Marthy Jane Ward 11 months 1 day diarrhea. Irena R. Dodge 5 months 2 days; measles. Parley P. Rosecrans, 1 year 6 months; diarrhea. Louisa Langdon, 19 years 4 months; fever. John A. Bliss 4 years 5 months; scarlet fever. John Mulford, 1 year 1 month 12 days; hives. George F. Potter, 1 month 5 days; canker. Kersey Baldwin, 1 year 20 days; measles. Marthey Ann Walker, 21 years; dierrhea. Margret Wilkinson, 22 years 10 months; fever. Lydia Walker, 8 years 11 months; chill fever, total 15.

W. D HUNTINGTON, Sexton.

DIED, In this city on the 15th inst. Harvey B. son of Alonzo and Clarissa LeBaron, aged 10 months.

Sexton's report in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, August 16, 1843.

It has been possible to clearly identify 47 causes of death as listed by the sexton in the reports (see Table I). This study will focus only upon those diseases which caused ten or more deaths per year. (Table II). This figure encompassed nearly 70% of all reported mortality at Nauvoo. An exception to this predetermined level of frequency has been made for consumption and measles, both of which declined significantly between 1843 and 1845.

Fever or ague accounted for one hundred and eighty-nine deaths at the Mormon community during this nearly three-year time span (25.5%). In 1844 alone, over eighty persons died from these causes. While early settlers in the Mississippi Valley had associated these chronic maladies with wet and swampy locales, the real culprit in the spread if such malarial diseases, the *Anopheles mosquito,* remained scientifically unrecognized until years later. However, some Illinois Mormons did perceive a

TABLE I

Various Causes of Death at Nauvoo, Illinois, 1843-45, as Identified by the City Sexton

*Percentages in all tables rounded to nearest .10.

Cause	Per Cent of Total Deaths	Cause	Per Cent of Total Deaths
1. Ague	4.3	25. Hives	0.1
2. Accidents	1.0	26. Infant Death	0.1
3. Apoplexy	0.5	27. Jaundice	0.1
4. Asthma	0.1	28. Old Age	0.9
5. Billious Fever	0.3	29. Inflammation of Bowel	1.2
6. Black Canker	1.4	30. Inflammation of Brain	8.1
7. Bloody Flux	1.5	31. Inflammation of Lungs	3.5
8. Cancer	1.0	32. Measles	4.7
9. Canker	6.1	33. Murder	0.3
10. Cholera	0.5	34. Palsey	0.4
11. Cholic	0.3	35. Putrid Sore Throat	0.1
12. Congestion of the Brain	0.1	36. Mumps	0.1
13. Child Birth	0.9	37. Quinzy	0.3
14. Congestion	3.5	38. Rheumatic Fever	0.1
15. Consumption	5.7	39. Scarlet Fever	1.9
16. Croup	0.5	40. Numb Palsey	0.1
17. Diarrhea	10.7	41. Sore Throat	0.1
18. Dropsey	1.8	42. Rickets	0.1
19. Dropsey on the Brain	0.6	43. Teething	0.6
20. Dyspepsia	0.3	44. Typhus	2.7
21. Diptheria	0.4	45. Ulcers	0.1
22. Fever	22.6	46. Whooping Cough	3.1
23. Fits/Convulsions	1.9	47. Worms	0.1
24. Flux	0.9	48. Cause Missing/Not Listed	5.4
		TOTAL	100.0

TABLE II

Major Causes of Death in Nauvoo, Illinois, 1843-1845

Cause	1843		1844		1845		Row Totals	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Canker	17	7.0	11	3.9	17	7.9	45	6.1
Consump.	23	9.5	17	6.0	2	0.9	42	5.7
Diarrhea	34	14.0	20	7.0	23	10.7	77	10.4
Fever/Ague	57	23.6	85	29.8	47	21.9	189	25.8
Inflam. of the Brain	18	7.4	28	9.8	14	6.5	60	8.1
Measles	20	8.3	10	3.5	5	2.3	35	4.7
Other	73	30.3	114	40.0	107	49.8	294	39.6
Totals	242		285		215		742	

correlation between the insect and the fevers. Oliver B. Huntington mentioned in his journal that in 1844 the area surrounding Nauvoo was "sadly infested with mosketoes [sic]," and that they always appeared in conjunction with the sickness that regularly innundated the city. He further noted that during the warmest months it was impossible for a small child to be allowed to sleep alone for danger of excessive mosquito bites.[14]

July through October were the months when all of the fever-related deaths occured (Table III). Diarists often stated that this part of the year was the sickly season. Malaria, the correct medical term for many of the fevers and for ague, characteristically had a low mortality rate: it was a disease that weakened the body but rarely killed anyone outright. While death rarely followed on the heels of an attack of malaria, the accompanying loss of body weight and vigor left victims susceptible to a number of other life-threatening sicknesses. The disease was particularly hard on the elderly, perhaps because at their age they had the least physical ability to outlast the illness. But even those in the prime of adulthood (16-45 years old) suffered heavily from malaria (see Table IV). The Mormons did attempt to drain the swampy bottomland around Nauvoo, but these efforts seem to have done little to ease the occurence of malarial fevers.

The next most common cause of mortality at the Mormon community was listed as diarrhea. Use of this term was almost certainly descriptive of the symptoms displayed by victims prior to death rather than an explicit medical determination of the cause of demise. Diarrhea, according to the sexton's reports for 1843-45, accounted for 77 deaths or 10.4 per cent of all fatalities. In his undated recollections of the Nauvoo years, Mormon William Greenwood described a major illness as the "bowel disease" which attacked many in the Illinois community.[15] Although not listed as such on the sexton's reports, it seems highly likely that dysentary, which is characterized by diarrhea, was present at Nauvoo. Since an exceedingly

TABLE III

Month of Death, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1843-45

	1843		1844		1845		Row Totals	
Month	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
January	3	1.2	6	2.1	12	5.6	21	2.8
February	15	6.2	18	6.3	2	0.9	35	4.7
March	2	0.8	17	6.0	14	6.5	33	4.4
April	0	----	15	5.3	15	7.0	30	4.0
May	6	2.5	4	1.4	1	0.5	11	1.5
June	13	5.4	9	3.2	14	6.5	36	4.9
July	6	2.5	37	13.0	41	19.1	84	11.3
August	56	23.1	79	27.7	28	13.0	163	22.0
September	19	7.3	32	11.2	51	23.7	102	13.7
October	96	39.7	46	16.1	37	17.2	179	24.1
November	17	7.0	10	3.5	----	----	27	----
December	9	3.7	12	4.2	----	----	21	----
Totals	242		285		215			

high percentage (49.1) of the diarrhea-related deaths occurred among the very young (see Table III), this may also suggest *cholera infantum*. The latter disease, which has been characterized as a "common, and often fatal . . . diarrhea of young children prevailing in the summer months" was likely a leading killer of Nauvoo's children.[16] While the city sexton does attribute under one per cent of the deaths to cholera, no specification of type of the disease is made. Since *Asiatic Cholera* always struck in epidemic proportions, and no such massive attack occured in the Mississippi Valley during the years in question, only isolated cases *cholera infantum* and dysentary would explain the frequency of death from diarrhea.

Two causes of death which were significant in 1843 but had almost disappeared two years later were consumption and measles. The former, presently known as tuberculosis, was manifested by an extreme wasting away of the body, hence the name. While 23 fatalities due to consumption (9.5 per cent of the total) were reported in 1843 and 17 deaths (6.0 per cent) in 1844, by 1845 only two victims died of it. Tuberculosis is spread through contact with an infected person, exposure to diseased cattle or by intake of contaminated milk products.[17] Incidences of consumption at Nauvoo affected overwhelmingly those under five years of age (35.1%). While there is no clear explanation for the decline in consumption by 1845, it would appear that the general healthfulness and sanitation of the city must have improved as it passed from its frontier stages into a more established community. Since tuberculosis was not a seasonal illness, as were malarial fevers, it could have been all but eradicated by more sound health practices and better housing conditions. A combination of poor living conditions, weakened resistence, and less-than-adequate nutrition com-

bined with ongoing exposure to the elements often resulted in tuberculosis, especially among young children and teenagers prior to puberty.

The number of deaths attributed to measles was reduced by about half during each of the years under consideration. Since the disease is highly contagious, it is possible that Nauvoo experienced an epidemic of measles in 1843-44 which had all but disappeared by 1845. The likelihood of death from measles is increased by extreme fluctuations in the weather and by an unbalanced diet.[18] Fatalities from this disease, at Nauvoo, predominantly took place in the heat of summer (July and August) or during the winter months. Almost all cases of death from measles were among children under five years of age. In fact, after 1843 no one over five years old died from measles. As the population grew and improved medical care became available, along with a more nutritious diet, the likelihood of dying from this disease declined significantly.

Child mortality at Nauvoo was also affected by a disease categorized as "fevers of the brain." This sickness, which can often be identified in modern medical terminology as *Meningitis,* appeared almost exclusively in the very young in 1843 and 1844, and then, in 1845 no one under five years old died from "inflammation of the brain." Meningitis was most apt to occur during, or as a consequence of other diseases, such as measles, small pox, or scarlet fever.[19] The almost complete abscence of measles at Nauvoo in 1845 may help to explain the corresponding decrease in brain fever among the youngest age group.

TABLE IV

Correlation, Age and Cause of Death, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1843-45

Age	Ague		Canker		Consumption		Diarrhea	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
5 and under	2	9.5	12	48.1	13	35.1	27	49.1
6-15	2	9.5	7	28.0	0	----	9	16.4
16-25	3	14.3	2	8.0	8	21.6	6	10.9
26-35	5	23.8	4	16.0	4	10.8	3	5.5
36-45	4	19.0	0	----	5	13.5	2	3.6
46 and over	5	23.8	0	----	7	18.9	9	16.4
Unknown	0	----	0	----	0	----	0	----

Age	Fever		Inf. of Brain		Measles		Totals	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
5 and under	22	13.9	20	40.8	21	80.7	205	27.6
6-15	20	12.6	9	18.4	2	7.7	69	9.3
16-25	26	16.4	6	12.2	1	3.8	79	10.6
26-35	27	17.0	4	8.2	1	3.8	82	11.1
36-45	24	15.2	3	2.0	1	3.8	61	8.2
46 and over	37	23.4	6	12.2	0	----	104	14.0
Unknown	2	1.3	1	2.0	0	----	3	0.4

TABLE V

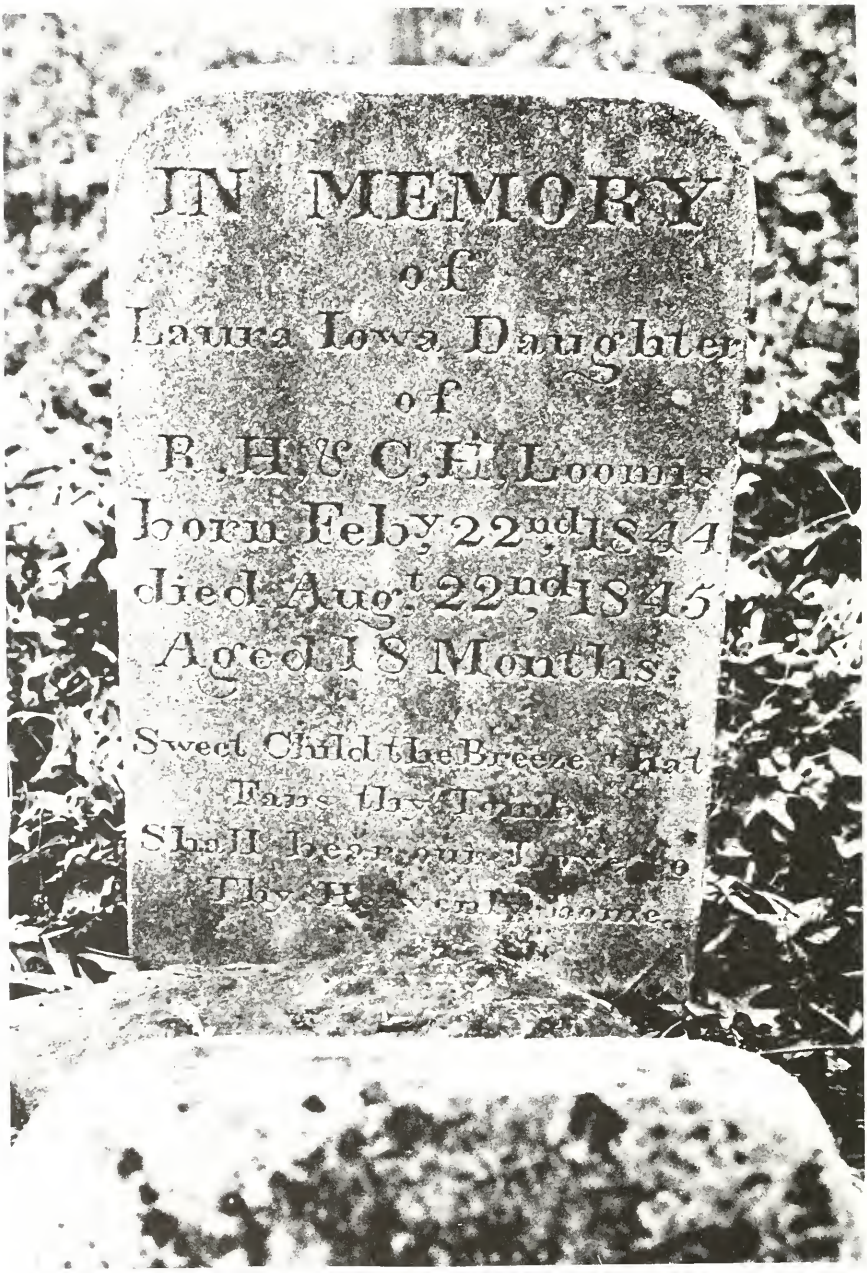
Age at Time of Death, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1843-1845

	1843		1844		1845		Row Totals	
Age in Years	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
5 and under	78	32.2	80	28.1	47	21.9	205	27.6
6-15	26	10.7	26	9.1	17	7.9	69	9.3
16-25	22	9.1	24	8.4	33	15.3	79	10.6
26-35	23	9.5	35	12.3	24	11.2	82	11.1
36-45	14	5.8	24	8.4	23	10.7	61	8.2
46 and over	28	11.6	42	14.7	34	15.8	104	14.0
Age unknown	51	21.1	54	18.9	37	17.2	142	19.1
Totals	242		285		215		742	

The final infirmity which annually caused a number of deaths among Nauvoo's residents was "canker," or "black canker." While most of the victims were under 25 (84.1%), canker did occasionally attack older people as well. Sarah Leavitt observed in her journal of the Nauvoo years that "There were many who died . . . with the disorder [canker]." Medically referred to as *Noma,* a gangrenous, progressive condition which particularly attacked children, canker was apparently a horrible way to die. It advanced rapidly through the area of the mouth and cheeks, loosening the teeth and often laying the jaw bare. It was a bacterial disease usually observed in poorly nourished individuals and often followed other diseases. The *Dictionary of Medicine,* published some fifty years after the period under consideration, estimated that not more than one in twenty having the disease recovered.[20] Although it did not evoke as high a mortality rate as some other diseases, it is easy to imagine that canker was viewed with fear by many nineteenth century Americans.

Some interesting trends can be discerned from the crude mortality statistics for frontier Nauvoo. Not surprisingly for the geographical location, fever was consistently the major cause of mortality. During the three years focused upon by this study it accounted for over 25 per cent of all deaths. Historians who have studied Nauvoo, and the Mississippi Valley in general, have always listed malaria as the greatest natural threat to life on the frontier. However, it would appear from the sexton's reports that malnutrition, exposure, and weakened health also contributed to the demise of many at Nauvoo. Another important aspect of the data is the profound impact of sickness upon the children of the Mormon community. Over one quarter of all deaths at Nauvoo struck among those five years and under (Table V). As one distraught Mormon mother commented following the passing of her second child within a few months time, it "seemed almost impossible to raise a child in Nauvoo."[21]

Finally, it is important to note the seasonal influence on mortality rates. The greatest number of deaths regularly took place in the late summer and



Child's gravestone in the Old Mormon Cemetery at Nauvoo.

in the fall. These were the months particularly given to outbreaks of malaria and other fevers caused by bacteria and viruses. Conversely, spring appears to have been the healthiest time in the city. The diary entries of William Huntington for the latter part of 1845 reveal this trend. In the first week of August he noted that "the Health of the people in the city [was] good, "yet within the following week he wrote of "some sickness and deaths," and by October there were "many sick in the city."[22]

Even as Nauvoo moved from its early frontier stage, and the community grew and prospered, the mortality rate remained relatively high. While some diseases, such as tuberculosis and measels subsided, the ongoing curses — fever and diarrhea — continued to claim victims. The crude mortality rate for Nauvoo was always well above the national average. In 1844, a dying man gave a lasting indictment of the Mississippi River community when, according to his widow, "George [said] after he was taken sick he was glad he hadn't got to allways [sic] live here."[23]

This study of Nauvoo for a three-year span in the mid-1840s has provided but a microcosmic view of some factors which may have affected mortality on the western Illinois frontier and throughout the Mississippi Valley. Further research into the records of other communities, large and small, which dotted the region is needed to provide an overall perspective on the mortality of frontier America. Given the fragmentary nature of historical studies regarding sickness and death during the pre-Civil War years, it would be unfair to attempt to assess the healthfulness of Nauvoo in comparison to other locations. Yet it is clear that the location of the Illinois Mormon community really never was able to become the healthy, welcome place which Joseph Smith and his early followers had envisioned in 1839.

NOTES

[1]For an extensive treatment of the Mormon settlement in Illinois, see Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 1-22; also James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), pp. 135-43.

[2]See Maris A. Vinovskis, "Mortality Rates and Trends in Massachusetts Before 1860," *Journal of Economic History*, 32 (March 1972), 185; and James M. Gallman, "Mortality Among White Males: Colonial North Carolina," *Social Science History* 4 (Summer 1980), 297.

[3]Population figures for the community vary somewhat according to the author consulted. Flanders, *Nauvoo*, has stated that the initial number of Latter-day Saints who migrated to Illinois totalled about 5,000 people (p. 1). The estimate for the mid-1840s is taken from Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 11, 348 fn. See also Richard H. Jackson, "Mormon Population and Settlement," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 68 (September 1978), 318 fn, which estimated

that Nauvoo "reached a population of approximately 15,000 by 1845." In this study the more moderate estimate of 11,000 persons will be used.

[4]David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974), p. 27; Flanders, *Nauvoo*, p. 38; and Levi Jackman, "Journal" (n.d.), p. 27, Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Hereafter cited as LDS Archives.

[5]*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, By Himself and Apostolic Interregnum*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), III, 375.

[6]Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *Malaria in the Upper Mississippi Valley 1760-1900* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945), pp. 4-8; Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), p. 40; and Peter T. Harstad, "Disease and Sickness on the Wisconsin Frontier: Malaria, 1820-1850," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 43 (Winter, 1959-60), 85.

[7]Newel Knight, Diary (n.d., c. 1839), p. 30, LDS Archives; Erastus Snow, "Sketch Book" (n.d.), p. 52, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Jessee Crosby, "History and Journal" (n.d.), p. 7, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City; *Times and Seasons* [Nauvoo, Illinois] 1 (November 1839), 16.

[8]Flanders, *Nauvoo*, p. 54; *History of the Church*, IV, 268; *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 15, 1841), 274; and *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 1, 1841), 259.

[9]Knight, Diary, p. 33; Allen and Leonard, p. 143; and *Times and Seasons* 2 (September 15, 1841), 543.

[10]Leonard J. Arrington, *From Quaker to Latter-day Saint* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), pp. 140-41.

[11]Jonah Bell, "Letters" (c. 1843), LDS Archives; *Times and Seasons* 2 (September 1, 1842), 906.

[12]Yasubichi Yasuba, *Birth Rates of the White Population in the United States, 1800-1860* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), pp. 80, 88; *Mortality and Morbidity in the United States ed.* Carl E. Erhardt and Joyce E. Berlin, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 2-3; and Vinovskis, pp. 209, 213.

[13]Sexton's reports published in the *Wasp* (Nauvoo, Illinois), January 21-March 22, 1843 and in the *Nauvoo* (Illinois) *Neighbor* May 17, 1843-October 29, 1845. When calculated for a population of 15,000 persons, which is the highest estimate for the city (see note 3), the ratio for 1843, 1844, and 1845 respectively is 18.1: 1,000, 25.9: 1,000, and 14.3: 1,000. The mortality statistics used throughout this study are based upon the sexton's reports.

[14]Harstad, "Disease and Sickness," p. 84; Flanders, p. 53 fn; and quotation from Oliver B. Huntington, Diaries (n.d.), Volume I, 47, Utah State Historical Society Library.

[15]William Greenwood, "Record and Genealogy" (n.d.), p. 8, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

[16]W. A. Newman Dorland, *The American Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1929), p. 272; *A Dictionary of Medicine: Includ-*

ing General Pathology, General Therapeutics Hygiene, and the Diseases of Women and Children, ed. Richard Quain, et. al., (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895), I, 324-32, 544-48; and *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary,* ed. Clayton L. Thomas, (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1977), pp. C. 61-2, D. 71.

[17]*Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary,* T. 79. A 1920s study found that 40-60% of tuberculosis in children could be traced directly to the consumption of contaminated milk products (see John B. Hawes, *Tuberculosis and the Community* [Philadelphia and New York: Lea & Febiger, 1932], p. 37).

[18]*A Dictionary of Medicine,* II, 19.

[19]Ibid., II, 38-49. In this study the "fevers of the brain" or "inflammation of the brain" category includes deaths listed on the sexton's report as caused by several brain related disorders including "congestion of the brain," "dropsey of the brain," "inflammation of the brain," "rheumatic fever," and "scarlet fever." All were obviously *not* meningitis, but certainly many of the incidences among those victims who were quite young may well have been.

[20]Quotation from Sarah Studevant Leavitt, Journal (n.d.), p. 21, Utah State Historical Society Library; *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary,* p. N. 34; and *A Dictionary of Medicine,* I, 271.

[21]Nancy Naomi Tracy, "A Sketch of the Life of Nancy Naomi Tracy" (n.d.), p. 25, Utah State Historical Society Library.

[22]William Huntington, Diary, 3 August-23 November 1845, pp. 33-43, LDS Archives.

[23]Sally Carlisle Randall, Letter, 21 April 1844, LDS Archives.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Community sesquicentennials in our region continue to foster the writing of town histories. Among the more substantial recent volumes are *Davenport 1836-1986: A Pictorial History* by Marlys Svendson, *A History of Ipava* by Wayne Azbell, and *Geneseo, Illinois: The First 150 Years* by the Geneseo Historical Association.

The Davenport history is a large, lovely book of the type that has become popular in recent years among communities with enough population to warrant a fairly expensive publication. As the sub-title suggests, photographs are of first importance. Both the quality and variety are excellent, and it would be hard to find a volume of community history with a more beautiful layout. It is a feast for the eyes. Moreover, Svendson provides an overview of Davenport's history that is very well written. It is presented as a continuous chronology, divided into five chapters and used to introduce the photographs. The book has a limited bibliography and an index. If a community wants to produce a pictorial history, this is the way to do it.

Ipava is a town of much smaller population and more limited means, but Wayne Azbell has served the community well with his history. It is a 275-page volume, and although reproduced in a photocopy format, it is well put together. Most of the photographs are clear, maps are included, and the text is enlivened with letters, newspaper accounts, and other documents of interest. Azbell, a professor at Western Illinois University, did a good job of writing, and he includes end notes, a compact chronology of events, and a genealogical appendix about the founding Easley family.

The Geneseo history is a large pictorial volume. The local historical association has an extensive photograph collection, which was well used. The photographs are sharp, and the layout is attractive. The writing is good but rather uneven in style, as one might expect in a volume produced by a committee. The authors are not identified, except in the Acknowledgements. The book is organized topically, so the reader does not comprehend the sweep of events within the town, and some of the recent photographs are undistinguished. But in general, the book is an attractive publication and a credit to the historical group that produced it.

Carl Landrum's *Historical Sketches of Quincy, Illinois* has been issued in a revised edition. It first appeared in 1969. The volume includes some new material and much better, clearer photographs. The forty-five sketches in the book originally appeared in the author's column, "From Quincy's Past," which has appeared in the *Quincy Herald Whig* for over twenty years. Landrum is, in fact, one of the most prolific local historians ever to write in western Illinois. His columns are extensive and generally

well written, although some are little more than summaries of material from newspaper files. A complete collection of them is available in the Special Collections unit of Western Illinois University Library, which also has his other book, *Quincy in the Civil War* (1966), and his book-length typescript, "A History of Music in Quincy." *Historical Sketches of Quincy, Illinois* is available in paperback and hardback at Landrum's Music Store in Quincy.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

TRAVELS IN ICARIA by Etienne Cabet. Translated by Robert P. Sutton. Macomb, Ill.: R. P. Sutton, 1985. Pp. 802. $40.

How does one review a long-overdue English translation of a work, originally in French, now nearly 150 years old? Does one discuss the content of the original? Its literary quality? Should one sketch the historic context out of which the original was produced? Its historic importance? Does the reader need to be informed of the character of the ideology and the social movement that sprung from the original? What of the aesthetic, accuracy, and technical quality of the English rendition?

Icarian specialists and a growing number of scholars interested in utopian socialism owe a special vote of thanks to Robert Sutton for now making Etienne Cabet's *Travels in Icaria* accessible to English readers. The task, now accomplished, surely must have been too much for persons of lesser fortitude to undertake previously. It has enabled this reviewer to have a new appreciation of Cabet's importance and the historic significance of Icarianism. It is perhaps appropriate to contemplate that *Travels in Icaria*, so influential in its own time, and the basis for human behavior, institutions, and thought that took on lives of their own in the 19th century, will now itself have new life suitable to the late 20th century.

The utopian novel, *Travels in Icaria*, was written by Etienne Cabet while he was in England between 1834-39 in exile because his radical republican beliefs had fallen into disfavor in France. It represents his conversion, along with that of other French exiles, to the pre-Marxian communism of fraternity, cooperation, and gradualism—the very thesis against which Marx would later hurl his antithesis—and collective ownership. The message of *Travels in Icaria* was reinforced by Cabet's other writings including a popular history of the French Revolution, his *True Christianity According to Jesus Christ*, and pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers and other mass educative materials.

Travels in Icaria is a rambling, philosophical, fictive account of the travels of English nobelman Lord Carisdall in an idylic land of natural and human-made environments. The history of Icaria strongly resembles that of France, including revolution and the rise of a (benevolent) dictator. This dictator, Icar, "could not look at an unhappy person without suffering himself." (p. 292). "It was the first two words of the Christian prayer, *Our Father*, which began to persuade him that all men are brothers and equals . . . and must love each other . . . ." (p. 293). Icar has led his people into a peaceful, communal life in which all citizens equally share the fruits of their labors in agriculture and manufacturing. In the nation, "Icaria,"

public education, including vocational training, is open to all. There is no crime, and justice and reason prevail. The religion of Icaria opposes superstition; priests have no authority. The family is monogamous and all-important. While both sexes are equal, women do not fully participate in governing.

The government of Icaria organizes the nation and its economy for the benefit of all into provinces and communes strongly resembling the decimalized rationality of Charles Fourier. Land and capital are collectively owned. Basic necessities are provided without the use of money or buying and selling. "Money . . . augments . . . (injustice) . . . in giving to the Aristocracy, which could not have been able to amass and conserve . . the products of the earth, the facility . . . to pile up its gold and continually increase its fortune." (p.429)

In general, *Travels* can be seen as the popular welding of a romanticized Medieval community (Cabet was much impressed by Thomas More's *Utopia)* and some of the values of the 18th century Enlightenment before the age of television. (The Sutton translation runs to more than 800 manuscript pages.) It is a vague call to action before the *Manifesto* of Karl Marx. The popularity of *Travels* must surely be attributed to the responsive cord it hit in the common man who was losing position while observing the redistribution of wealth and political power and the bourgeoisification of Europe in the 1840s. "The great discoveries in science and industry do not make only *scientific* and *industrial* revolutions, but also *social* and *political* revolutions." (p. 645)

Sutton's introduction to his translation of *Travels* is, perhaps, useful depending on the audience(s) to whom it is addressed. The summary of the novel seems quaintly dated now that the reader limited to English has in hand the full benefit of Sutton's own important labors. The scholar will find it inadequate or unnecessary. The general reader who perhaps will never read the full text deserves more.

This said, the introduction stands as one of the best short summaries of the place in history of a distant social movement that this reviewer has come across. With modification, clarification of certain points, and elaboration of and addition of numerous others, it could be made useful to a variety of persons, generalists and specialists alike. Among those who come more readily to mind are historians of 19th century French popular movements and ideas, sociologists of community, political scientists concerned with 20th century totalitarianism and its roots, economists of industrialism and modernization, social scientists generally who study Marxian thought and its origins, and persons who trace their American ethnic roots to France.

It is perhaps inappropriate for this reviewer/sociologist to detract from Sutton's important accomplishment by wishing that the introduction he has written had not been so narrowly historical, almost antiquarian. It is built on several unexamined and therefore unquestioned and dubious

assumptions that occur repeatedly in a certain variety of scholarship, about utopias and utopianism.

A brief review such as this does not allow one to deal with these assumptions at length. Three major ones can be mentioned. First, the meanings of "community" and of the "failure" of utopian communities are at worst vague and at best undefined. In this instance, for example, Sutton can only sustain his thesis of failure by practically ignoring the 40-year existance of Icaria/Corning and declining to see the events of Icaria/Nauvoo as transitional in a larger picture of community renewal and adaptation. Second, the use of the word "charisma" in referring to Cabet's leadership completely ignores accepted social scientific (Weberian) meaning and application of the concept. The assumption that the quality of charisma is inherent only in the individual is facile and obscures the facts of Cabet's biography. Cabet can be better understood by not applying the word "charisma" to him at all. Third, Cabet and Icarianism and America's seven Icarias are reduced to mere trivia and romantic anecdote if they are not seen as being of a piece with the larger movements of their time. They are thereby related to the writings and thought of Cabet's greater contemporaries, Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx. In death as in life, Cabet needs protection from his friends.

An English translation of *Travels in Icaria,* so long needed but only now appearing, is perhaps a consequence of the advanced development of the very forces that Cabet and his utopian contempories feared most and for which they proposed the remedy of fraternal communism.

The irony lies, as Tocqueville anticipated, in the fact that the bureaucratized, bourgeoise culture created out of greed for material well being and the personal vanity of modern mass communication, all presided over by the administration mentality, has achieved the sought-after communal uniformity. Now that the computer/word processor has arrived in the domain of scholarship, one can contemplate innumerable digitalized Fourierist phalanxes devoted to the translation of historical texts, all because such enterprise has the ease of efficient administrative definition of merit.

In the contemplation of the new order appearing in their own era, Tocqueville and Marx saw in democracy and bourgeoise economies that, with the passage of time, the very solutions of the problems hindering human advance in one period often result in self-contradictory values structures, and negating forces in a later period. Thus in our own time, the American democracy that Tocqueville so acutely observed seems, under the homogenizing impact of the mass media, on the verge of becoming the tyranny of the majority that he feared. Similarly, Marx's well-known forecast of capitalism's self-destruction from its internal contradictions comes increasingly to pass with every leveraged buyout, corporate merger, or junk bond offer to the investing public.

Cabet, himself of serious mind, firm intention, and self-importance, would have had little patience with these ruminations. He reveled in his

own fame, anticipating immortality, but showed little understanding of the iron-pants academic enterprise often called "community."

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WE ARE SHERMAN'S MEN: THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF HENRY ORENDORFF. By William M. Anderson. Western Illinois Monograph Series, No. 6. Macomb: Western Illinois University, 1986. Pp. 140. Acknowledgments, notes, map, illustrations and index. Paper, $3.95.

Of almost 2000 regiments raised for the Union armies in the Civil War, most were creatures of the states. State and local politicians often took the lead in organizing these units. Virtually a model of its kind was the 103rd Illinois Infantry, known as the Fulton County Regiment because it emerged from the efforts of Fulton County political leaders and most of its members came from that west central Illinois county. Between its formation in late 1862 and its participation in the 1865 Grand Review in Washington, the Fulton County Regiment fought at Missionary Ridge, slogged through the Atlanta Campaign, and marched to the sea with William Tecumseh Sherman. Almost twenty-five percent of its officers and men died of wounds or disease. One of the survivors was Henry Orendorff, a Fulton County farmer who served in the regiment from its beginning to its muster out. *We Are Sherman's Men* is a collection of almost two hundred letters Orendorff wrote to his relatives.

William M. Anderson, who is president of West Shore Community College in Scottsville, Michigan, and a veteran Civil War scholar, did more than simply edit and organize these letters. His extensive notes identify most of the names in the correspondence, explain the events mentioned, and relate the regiment's story to the larger war. He deserves commendation for digging through census returns, the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, county histories, local newspapers, and other sources in the pursuit of evidence.

Three stories emerge from these letters. First, there is a portrait of the man, Henry Orendorff. From eager, fun-loving, patriotic, raw recruit, to a thrice-wounded combat veteran with a lieutenant's commission, Orendorff is the Everyman of America's greatest drama. He found a home with his friends and comrades in the regiment, and returned eagerly to that home from leaves. Like most Americans of his generation, he was a casual racist. More surprisingly, given his own name, was his critical attitude toward German immigrants. Far more important in terms of his general character were his generosity, fortitude, patriotism, sense of responsibility, and good humor. This latter trait was a saving grace for countless soldiers in the tedium and horror of war.

The second story is that of the regiment and the war. Boredom and camp routine took up far more of the soldier's time than combat. As

Orendorff put it, "Soldiering is rather lazy work a goodeal [sic] of the time." Content after a good meal, he wrote his sister, "Oh! who wouldn't be a soldier." From the perspective of the soldier in the ranks, life in the regiment was a steady round of drill, foraging, endless marches, disease (and primitive medical care), coping with the bureaucracy, and interminable waiting. Only rarely do these letters offer a glimpse of battle.

The third story is that of mid-nineteenth century American society. Here are intimate glimpses of family life, of affection and friendships, of foods, clothing and doing laundry—all of the details of ordinary life. Orendorff and his friends opposed abolition, but supported Lincoln and the Union.

We Are Sherman's Men is not a regimental history. It is a valuable part of the raw material from which history is fashioned. Anderson, and Henry Orendorff's granddaughter who permitted publication of the letters, deserve the thanks of this and future generations.

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PEORIA! By Jerry Klein. Peoria, Ill.: Visual Communications, Inc. and the Peoria Historical Society, 1985. Pp. 276, $24.95

Jerry Klein has been writing historical articles for many years as a newspaper writer for the *Peoria Journal Star*. His vignettes of dozens of central Illinois villages and communities were the basis for publishing his collection of such informal essays in 1980, called *Played in Peoria*. It was a different challenge, however, sorting through the vast amount of material available on a city the size of Peoria, with intent to integrate previously written histories with new data and bring the record up to date.

With access to many sources of photographs, clippings and other writings, and with research assistance from the Peoria Historical Society, Klein has filled this well-designed volume with hundreds of illustrations and pictures of Peoria's 300-year history. His geological overview and his account of pre-historic and historic occupation of the area by Indians follows the usual sequence and is nicely organized. Probably the best section of the book is his well-researched story of the French presence in Illinois and their settlements in or near Peoria. Included is an account of the controversy over the location of short-lived Fort Crevecoeur and its significance in the 130 years of French Peoria. This era ended with Governor Ninian Edwards' useless and brutal attack in 1812 which destroyed all remnants of Indian and French occupation. The fact that almost two-fifths of Peoria's three centuries of existence was under French control or influence deserves this special recognition by Klein

The next 150 years of Peoria's history is covered by a topical approach which reflects, perhaps, a journalist's style of writing. Transportation, for example is a major subject which is well illustrated by a sequential account of the steamboat era, the heyday of railroads, the advent of the

automobile and finally, air travel. Peoria's entertainment history starts with the early opera houses followed by movies, music and theater, including the "played in Peoria" cliché that signified that this locality was the end of the line on the vaudeville circuit. Klein nicely refutes such downplay, however, by describing the great cultural center that Peoria has become in recent years.

Other subjects dealt with in a topical manner include sports, which emphasizes the importance of Bradley University's basketball fame, religion, medical care, and business and industry. It is in this latter area that the book is weakest. After a chapter which presents a fine overview of Peoria's first century of business enterprise, covering coal mining, breweries, distillaries, farm implements, earth-moving equipment and other manufacturing, a large section is devoted to one-page "histories" of business, educational and religious organizations now thriving in the city. Some of these accounts read as though they were written by the organization's public relations department, with self-glorification and uninhibited pride in past, present and future. Called "Partners in Progress," all of these organizations contributed to the cost of publishing the book, which means that many important businesses were not included, and some that do appear might well have been dealt with more objectively. There is nothing new in this system, however. County histories were published by the hundreds from the 1870s through the turn of the century, financed mainly through subscriptions from individuals and businesses who were favorably portrayed in text and picture. Subscription by corporate patrons is still in use today and makes it economically possible to publish local histories, but with the drawbacks as noted.

Jerry Klein is enthusiastic about the present quality of life in Peoria and he dwells at some length on the status of the city in the 1980s. This documents for the future how a quarter of a million Peoria area people lived, worked, and played at the time the book was published. Again, this is the journalism approach to history, and it makes the book very readable, informative and even entertaining. It will place in schools, libraries and homes a needed and useful account of Peoria's past and present, but a critical history of Peoria's last 150 years, with analysis and perspective that integrates the many facets of life in Peoria, is still needed. For now, Jerry Klein's *Peoria!*, written while working full-time for his newspaper, is certainly "playing in Peoria" and serves a true need for an updated history of this old midwestern city.

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LANDMARK SPRINGFIELD: ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF ILLINOIS. By Christian K. Laine, Chicago: Metropolitan Press Publication, 1985. Pp. 111. $10.00.

This book amounts principally to a photographic review of Springfield's monumental architecture with brief essays to exhort the city to urbanism. To Christian K. Laine, an architectural journalist from Chicago, urbanism means an integrated program of public building befitting the capital's statewide stature. About 300 photographs and drawings provide most of the book; whereas, the written text equals sixteen pages at most. Laine is credited with authorship for he took most of the photographs and wrote the feature essay. However, this work is truly a collaboration for which Laine incorporated essays and photographs by many others and acknowledged assistance mostly from Ioannis Karalis and Charlotte M. Bagdonas.

Vachael Lindsay's poem "The Springfield of the Far Future" serves as the forward and sets the visionary tone of the book by promising that an urban city can emerge from the "little town." Edward J. Russo's "Introduction" follows with acknowledgement of Springfield's general disregard for civic improvement yet pleasantness "in the utterly un-self-conscious adaptations of various styles . . ." (p. 7). In Laine's succeeding feature essay he praises Springfields's late nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture for harnessing material growth to civic pride in the Beaux-Arts style: "a vision of the past and a vision of the future" (p. 13). Accordingly, he laments the failure to realize the city plan of 1925 and the subsequent fragmentation of community by speculative land clearances and ugly new buildings. Essays follow with photographs and drawings to describe Laine's favorite architecture and the work of his favorite architectural firms. These include, for example, reprints of articles from trade journals about the urban plan of 1925, Laine's essays on the firms of Helmle and Helmle, Bullard and Bullard, and the state Capitol, and anonymous treatments of the Susan Lawrence Dana-Thomas House and the Lincoln Home historic district. Illustrations, most of them photographs, are also organized only with captions identify ing individual buildings under several general headings: Beaux-Arts Buildings, Commercial Buildings and Hotels, Religious Buildings and Institutions, and Residential Buildings. A concluding landmark map and bibliography suggest some use as a guide to Springfield's architecture.

Laine's haste to prove his thesis forces many problems. Exaggeration and oversights are the most serious because they narrow the scope of the would-be guide book. It is arguable that Springfield's turn-of-the-century architecture never rose above mediocre but Laine must insist it did in order to diminish later twentieth century work. As a result, the city building and county courthouse are unfairly branded "most undistinguished" (p. 14). Nor do the earliest expressions of functionalism in the Art Deco and Art Moderne deserve the five meager pages to which they are dismissed. And, Laine's reduction of the vernacular to architect-designed local interpretations of high styles precludes inclusion of many smaller houses by unknown builders which impart a special character to the capital and lend perspective to its grand examples.

Omissions and lack of emphasis are less understandable when they are of Laine's preferred style. Why do the Police Department building, Lincoln's initial vault, and the library at Lawrence School designed by Frank Lloyd Wright receive no treatment? Why is Washington Park mentioned in only one sentence as a neighborhood and not noted as the design of landscape architect Ossian C. Simonds? Why is Lincoln Memorial Gardens squeezed into two pages with no descriptive and evaluative essay when it is generally counted a significant creation of the noted landscape architect Jens Jensen? Perhaps the answers lie in the author's unfamiliarity with his topic.

No more damning proof of this exists than in numerous mistaken identities. Typographical errors abound. Fort de Chartres is given as Fort Charles, Governor Tanner as Tranner, the Sangamo Club as the Sagano Club, Vredenburgh as Viedenburgh, and Booten as Boaten. Finally, the Bunn-Sankey House is incorrectly named the Bressmer-Baker House.

It is the photographs, however, which are the worst aspect of this book. Shadows suggest that many photographs perhaps were taken in a single afternoon tour rather than waiting for the most revealing view. Better can be expected from one whose architectural writing depends so heavily on the allied craft of photography and a book whose greatest space is given to a media that implies it is more than a visual aid.

Despite Laine's shoddy factual knowledge, he does see one aspect of contemporary Springfield for what it is, a landscape of random expansions by state government, dominated by commerce, unbecoming a capital. Lindsay, on whom Laine relied to see the capital's mystical qualities and hope for their architectural fulfillment, had faith that the vision of Lincoln would empower his hometown's civic improvement; but this wishful thinking failed to realize that Springfield was no more and no less than a political center where genius like Lincoln's derived opportunity not inspiration. It is Russo's "Introduction," not Laine's exhotation, which more faithfully guides the reader; unselfconsciousness explains the absence of urbanism at the same time as it yields a pleasant array of styles. Yet all its limitations notwithstanding, Illinois' capital deserves a more sensitive and better informed architectural guide than Laine's.

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